

## EURACOAL Press Release

### **European Association for Coal and Lignite elects new President and Vice Presidents: Mr. Paweł Smoleń of Polish utility PGE becomes President of the Association**

**Brussels (21 January 2013)** – The European Association for Coal and Lignite (EURACOAL) today elected Mr. Paweł Smoleń as its new President. He succeeds Dr. Ing. Hartmuth Zeiß of Vattenfall who held the post since the beginning of 2011. Mr. Smoleń, a Polish national and Vice President of the Management Board for Operations at the Polish utility company Polska Grupa Energetyczna SA (PGE), brings his 20 years of energy-sector experience to the Association which acts as the “voice of coal” in Europe.

Prof. Franz-Josef Wodopia, representing the German hard coal sector, was re-elected as a Vice President and is joined by newly elected Mr. Piotr Rykala, representing hard coal mining companies in Poland, and by Mr. Nigel Yaxley representing UK coal importers.

After their executive meeting, EURACOAL members and guests, including Ms. Sylvia Beyer on behalf of Mr. Keisuke Sadamori, Director of Energy Markets and Security at the IEA, heard Mr. Smoleń thank Dr. Zeiß for his leadership of the Association over two years and for his hard work in promoting the coal industry across Europe. Mr. Smoleń took the opportunity to present his views on the challenges that lie ahead. Observing that coal is a secure and competitive fuel for power generation, he said that, “The modernisation of coal-fired power plants is essential if we are to avoid higher power prices.” He warned that the EU could not solve the climate challenge alone and urged policy makers to, “Stop making impossible promises and instead take some practical steps today that can give immediate benefits – such as improved energy efficiency at power plants – whilst investing in a range of new technologies for the future.” As EURACOAL President, Mr. Smoleń promised to promote a rational and pragmatic climate and energy policy in Brussels, one that balances the sometimes competing objectives of wealth creation, employment, energy security and reduced emissions.

**Mr. Paweł SMOLEŃ** is Vice President of the Management Board for Operations at the Polish electricity utility Polska Grupa Energetyczna SA (PGE). He graduated in engineering from Warsaw University before completing postgraduate studies in marketing and market analysis at the Warsaw School of Economics. He is a chartered accountant in Poland (KIBR) and the UK (ACCA), and worked as a partner at Arthur Andersen with energy-sector responsibilities from 1992 to 2001. Until recently, he worked in Germany as a member of the management board at Vattenfall Group, responsible for production assets, having held several other senior positions with responsibilities in Central Europe, including Vice President of VTS A/S – a coal trading company in Copenhagen. From 2008 to 2012, Mr. Smoleń was President of the Polish Energy Sector’s Private Employers Association. He is currently Vice President of the Polish Confederation of Private Employers (PKPP Lewiatan) and is a board member of the Confederation of Polish Lignite Producers (PPWB – Porozumienie Producentów Węgla Brunatnego).

**Mr. Piotr RYKALA** is Vice Chairman of Kompania Węglowa SA, Poland’s largest hard coal producer, where he has responsibility for human resources. A graduate of the Faculty of Law and

Administration at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun, he began his career at the large Borynia coal mine, working there from 1981 to 1999. From 1999 to 2003, he served as Vice Chairman of the Board at Rybnik Coal Company. In 2003, he was appointed a board director and then Vice Chairman of Kompania Węglowa SA. From 2003 to 2005, he was President of the Polish Hard Coal Mining Employers' Association (ZPGWK – Związek Pracodawców Górnictwa Węgla Kamiennego). He was re-elected as President of the Association in 2012.

**Prof. Dr. Franz-Josef WODOPIA** was born in 1957 in Heidelberg, Germany. A qualified economist, he first held various posts in the fields of energy and science and then became Professor at the University of Bochum in Germany. At the Mining, Chemical and Energy Industrial Union (IG BCE), Prof. Wodopia headed the Mining and Energy Industries Department. In mid-2005, he became Managing Director of Gesamtverband Steinkohle (German Hard Coal Association) where he is a Member of the Board.

**Mr. Nigel YAXLEY** is Managing Director at CoalImp, the Association of UK Coal Importers. He is also Head of Development (Central and Eastern Europe) at RecyCoal Ltd., a partner at Energy Edge Ltd. and a private consultant. Mr. Yaxley joined the then nationalised UK coal industry in 1977 after graduating in physics from Cambridge University. On the industry's privatisation in 1995, he joined UK Coal plc where he became Marketing Director. From 2005 to 2007, he was President of EURACOAL and has chaired the Association's Market Committee. Mr. Yaxley has a broad experience of all aspects of the coal industry and has acted as an expert witness on a number of occasions on matters related to coal pricing and coal contracts.

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President  
Mr. Paweł Smoleń



Vice President  
Mr. Piotr Rykala



Vice President  
Prof. Franz-Josef Wodopia



Vice President  
Mr. Nigel Yaxley

## Note for editors:

- The European Association for Coal and Lignite (EURACOAL) represents the interests of coal producers, coal importers and coal users in Brussels. The Association has 35 members from 20 countries. As well as the recently launched *A Strategy for Clean Coal*, the Association also publishes *Coal industry across Europe*, a detailed review of the European coal industry with sections on the world coal market and climate policy ([www.euracoal.org](http://www.euracoal.org)).

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