



Berlin, 19 February 2018

To the Mayor of Rotterdam, Mr Ahmed Aboutaleb; the CEO of Rotterdam Port, Mr Allard Castelein; and the Rotterdam City Council:

We are delighted to hear that the city council of Rotterdam is asking the Mayor and Aldermen for a strategy to phase out the transshipment of coal in the Rotterdam harbor, in line with the Paris United Nations climate agreement. Such courage to transform our economic infrastructure is needed to protect the world from warming above dangerous levels and from harmful pollution caused by the mining, transportation and burning of coal.

In 2015, the EU's coal-fired power stations alone caused an estimated 19,500 premature deaths. The economic cost of these fatalities along with the myriad of other health conditions caused by this air pollution is in the range of €29-54 billion.¹

Coal-based pollution knows no borders. This makes the Dutch government decision to phase out coal by 2030 a key contribution to Europe moving beyond coal; the earlier the Dutch plants close, the greater the benefits. To be fully in line with the Paris UN climate agreement, coal-related infrastructure should also be phased out.

Renewable generation capacity in Europe and Germany is growing, but not at the rate needed. Europe, and Germany in particular, still rely heavily on coal for electricity production. And the old, subsidised coal power infrastructure is technically and economically blocking the speedy transition to clean energy. We would therefore like to express our strong support for a concrete plan to phase out coal transshipments in the Rotterdam harbor, starting with coal used for electricity production.

The harbor of Rotterdam is the main coal-hub in Europe. It – quite literally – carries a significant responsibility for the health of European citizens. The lion's share of coal transshipments in Rotterdam is destined for German coal power plants. With Amsterdam harbor already deciding to go beyond coal, your decision to have Rotterdam harbor follow suit will leave no possibility to supply coal-fired power plants along the River Rhine in an economically viable way.

A phase-out of coal terminals in Rotterdam will therefore provide a strong incentive for closing some of the dirtiest power plants in the coal heartland in Europe.² German citizens overwhelmingly want a coal phase-out;³ and the new German government faces the task of setting an ambitious phase out pathway. A decision by you to make Rotterdam harbor Paris-compliant would thus really enhance the possibilities for a German *Kohleausstieg*, alongside the Dutch one.

¹ https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B_L0j-fgbPXUWEZmMV80YzQxb2c/view

² <https://beyond-coal.eu/data/>

³ <http://energiewendebeschleunigen.de/2017/10/umfrage-mehrheiten-fuer-kohleausstieg-und-schnelleren-ausbau-der-erneuerbaren-energien/>; <https://www.vox.com/energy-and-environment/2017/11/20/16678350/global-support-clean-energy>;
<https://www1.wdr.de/nachrichten/landespolitik/nrw-trend-200.html> (slide 5)



A phase-out of coal transshipment in the harbor of Rotterdam will tremendously help Europe overcome its addiction to coal and take the next step to a better, healthier and more prosperous future. Please be assured of our support.

Yours sincerely,

Mahi Sideridou
Managing Director, Europe Beyond Coal

Also on behalf of



350.org
Air Pollution and Climate Secretariat (AirClim)
Les Amis de la Terre
Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland
BankTrack
CEE Bankwatch Network
Center for Ecology and Energy
Center for Environment
ClientEarth
The Climate Reality Project, Europe
Coal Action Network UK
European Environmental Bureau

Focus Association for Sustainable Development
Fossilvrij NL
Germanwatch e.V.
Greenpeace Deutschland
Greenpeace Nederland
Klima-Allianz Deutschland
Kohleausstieg Berlin
Misereor
Rozwój TAK - Odkrywi NIE
Sandbag
urgewald