



Vattenfall AB  
Attn.: Ms. Borg  
SE-169 92  
Stockholm  
Sweden

Amsterdam, 25 April 2023

**Subject: Vattenfall's involvement in Tata Steel IJmuiden**

Dear Ms. Borg,

In the Netherlands, Vattenfall is involved in the operation of a large steel plant in IJmuiden, owned by Tata Steel. Vattenfall owns three power plants that convert gasses coming from the coking ovens and blast furnaces to electricity and heat, most of which is used by Tata Steel.<sup>1</sup> Greenpeace Netherlands is starting a public campaign against Tata Steel IJmuiden. We demand that the polluting coking ovens are closed as soon as possible. Via this letter we would like to inform you about our concerns and ask you to reconsider Vattenfall's relationship with Tata Steel IJmuiden.

The coking ovens are far beyond their normal life span. Coking oven 1 was built in 1924 and last renovated in 1980. Coking oven 2 was built in 1972. Recently, the Dutch news program *EenVandaag* revealed that coking oven 2 was constructed poorly and has been leaking carcinogenic polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH) from the beginning.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, the coking ovens regularly produce 'raw cokes', which leads to clouds full of PAH. Tata Steel indicates that the coking ovens cannot avoid producing raw cokes now and then, which is remarkable considering the fact that this is illegal. The regional environmental authority has started to impose penalties, but without effect. The Province of North-Holland is currently investigating the legal possibility of redrawing the permits of coking oven 2, forcing Tata Steel to end its operation. Recently, Tata Steel was convicted by the Court of Amsterdam for a series of environmental crimes.<sup>3</sup>

The region around Tata Steel IJmuiden is densely populated, with 150.000 people living directly around the steel plant. The Netherlands Comprehensive Cancer Organization concluded in 2020 that there is a significantly higher lung cancer incidence in the municipalities around Tata Steel, up to 51%.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://powerplants.vattenfall.com/velsen/>, <https://powerplants.vattenfall.com/ijmond/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://eenvandaag.avrotros.nl/item/vervuilende-kooksfabriek-2-van-tata-steel-blijkt-verkeerd-gebouwd-rookt-en-lekt-vanaf-eerste-dag-aan-alle-kanten/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.rechtspraak.nl/Organisatie-en-contact/Organisatie/Rechtbanken/Rechtbank-Amsterdam/Nieuws/Paginas/Geldboete-van-.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> <https://eenvandaag.avrotros.nl/item/nog-meer-mensen-met-longkanker-in-de-omgeving-van-tata-steel-dan-eerder-bekend/>



In 2022, the Dutch Environmental Assessment Agency (RIVM) measured the amounts of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and metals in coarse dust particles deposited on the ground in the area surrounding Tata Steel for the third time. This coarse dust is causing a public health crisis in the vicinity of the Tata Steel site.

The results of this study confirm the findings of the two previous studies: *“coarse dust particles deposited in the IJmond region contain larger amounts of PAHs and metals than coarse dust elsewhere in the Netherlands. These amounts are undesirable with a view to the health of children.”*

The power plants of Vattenfall also cause direct problems for local residents as these regularly emit damaging rest particles.<sup>5</sup> All this leads us to conclude that Vattenfall’s involvement in the operation of the steel plant does not align with Vattenfall’s sustainability strategy, and branding. We saw that Vattenfall recently removed their logo from the largest of the three power plants that burn coking gas. I would like to ask you, what was the reason to remove the logo?

We think the liability of Vattenfall’s business relation with Tata Steel is twofold: Both reputational and financial. Reputational, because Tata Steels coking plants that provide fuel for Vattenfall’s power plants are breaking environmental laws and causing higher incidence of cancer amongst local residents. These local residents, who have been fighting against Tata Steel’s pollution for many years, are now joined by larger organizations, including Greenpeace, Urgenda and Extinction Rebellion. The latter is specifically focusing on Vattenfall’s involvement with Tata Steel and recently demonstrated in front of Vattenfall’s head office in Amsterdam.<sup>6</sup> The financial risk involves withdrawal of the environmental permits of the coking ovens on a short notice. This will lead to an end of the supply of coking gasses to Vattenfall’s power plants.

Tata Steel IJmuiden adopted a plan to end steel production with blast furnaces and switch to Direct Reduced Iron (DRI) using natural gas and green hydrogen when available. According to Tata Steel, the first DRI should be running in 2030 and the second not earlier than 2035. However, Tata Steel refuses to close the toxic coking ovens before the DRI’s are running, causing significant health damage for another generation. Keeping the coking ovens in operation for such a long period of time is becoming highly unrealistic, both socially, legally and politically. The Dutch State secretary of Infrastructure and Waterways, Vivianne Heijnen recently stated that *“It’s getting harder and harder to trust that things will work out,”* referring to the coking ovens.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nhnieuws.nl/nieuws/304323/tientallen-autoschades-door-roestuitstoot-vattenfall-fabriek-het-is-verschrikkelijk>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.nhnieuws.nl/nieuws/312206/extinction-rebellion-bezet-hoofdkantoor-vattenfall-om-tata-tot-sluiten-te-dwingen>

<sup>7</sup> <https://eenvandaag.avrotros.nl/item/steeds-lastiger-om-nog-vertrouwen-te-hebben-dat-het-goed-komt-zegt-staatssecretaris-over-tata-steel/>



This also means that the scenario that Tata Steel IJmuiden will go bankrupt becomes more and more realistic. Greenpeace and Urgenda commissioned a report to find out what the opportunities are for Tata Steel personnel on the labor market. The report concludes that people working at Tata Steel and in the supply chains are very much in demand and there are plenty of vacancies in the region.<sup>8</sup>

On behalf of Greenpeace Netherlands I would strongly advise you to end Vattenfall's involvement with Tata Steel in the Netherlands as soon as possible.

Pending your response, I am more than willing to further explain our position and campaign goals in a (digital) conversation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Andy Palmen', is written over a blue horizontal line.

Andy Palmen,  
Executive director Greenpeace the Netherlands

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.greenpeace.org/nl/greenpeace/56187/voor-elke-tata-steel-medewerker-ruim-voldoende-banen-in-de-regio-beschikbaar/>