

Attn: Mr Claude Atcher, CEO, Rugby World Cup France 2023

GIP#FRANCE2023
24 rue Saint-Victor, 75005 Paris

Paris, 6 April 2022

Re: Call to break off the partnership between Rugby World Cup France 2023 and TotalEnergies

Dear Mr Atcher,

Like you, we are appalled and saddened by the war waged by the Russian regime against the people of Ukraine. All our thoughts go to the civilians who are fearing for their lives or are forced to flee the fighting. This conflict is first and foremost a tragedy for Ukrainians, but also for the Russian population, who will be hard hit by its repercussions.

The sporting world, and more specifically rugby, was moved by the situation and rapidly took action: only four days after the start of the war, [World Rugby confirmed sanctions](#) against Russia and Belarus. Soon thereafter, the Board of Directors of the 2023 Rugby World Cup announced the suspension of the Russian and Belarusian teams from the qualifying matches of the tournament. As a result, Russia and Belarus will not take part in the 2023 Rugby World Cup.

We are writing to you today following this decision, in order to draw your attention to an inconsistency that persists: the presence of TotalEnergies among the sponsors of this major international sports competition. As you know, the money from oil and gas sustains the Russian State and TotalEnergies is the only oil and gas major to refuse to suspend its activities in Russia. As a consequence, the multinational [runs the risk of contributing to financing Vladimir Putin's war](#).

As you are also aware, TotalEnergies is one of the biggest emitters of CO₂ worldwide. This situation is not about to change, since 90% of its business and 80% of its investments concern fossil fuels. We already discussed this last November when you consulted us as part of your drive to make the Rugby World Cup an environmentally-friendly event that is committed to climate protection. You told us that TotalEnergies' financial contribution to this event would account for 1%. This one percent will enable TotalEnergies to associate its logo with a highly appreciated and internationally renowned sporting event. As we told you at the time, it is not possible to hold a "Green World Cup" with TotalEnergies as a sponsor.

Sports sponsorship is one of the [strategies](#) leveraged by TotalEnergies to ensure that its destructive industrial practices are socially acceptable, by masquerading as a philanthropic company serving both society and sport. The multinational is using rugby's popular and positive image to prop up its own tarnished reputation. Compensation in kind, such as invitations to the official boxes and exclusive receptions, alongside Heads of State and political and economic decision-makers, are also a means for the major to extend its scope for influence.

Following our meeting, you promised us that you would consider this issue. This partnership was already unacceptable. Today it is shameful and sullies the image of the upcoming competition. Accepting money from TotalEnergies amounts to endorsing the oil and gas major's activities that damage the climate. Furthermore, this company is currently operating in a country where the regime is guilty of war crimes. Are these the activities with which the rugby world wishes to associate its values?

Do not let TotalEnergies take advantage of your image and popularity. Do not give the company a platform to redeem its conduct. Do not hand it new climate-destroying contracts on a platter. Exclude TotalEnergies from your sponsors. Several events have already made this move, such as Paris City Hall which has refused the company's sponsorship of the 2024 Olympic Games. We remain at your disposal to discuss this further.

Respectfully,

Jean-François Julliard,
Executive Director of Greenpeace
France

