



Letter to support sustainable development through ecotourism in Roșia Montană

We, as experts in ecotourism, nature conservation and local sustainable development, considering that Roșia Montană area in Apuseni Mountains faces the risk of irreversible destruction because of a mining project we want to show our support regarding the option of alternative development in the area. We believe that **ecotourism** is a viable solution in the area's natural and cultural context and it can generate a substantial social impact (job opportunities), as well as an economic impact (direct and indirect income to the local economy) without destroying the natural and cultural resources. The efficiency of the ecotourism development model is shown by the success of various ecotourism destinations at global and European level.

We consider appropriate for the area development through ecotourism option to be concretized by the adoption of the existing General Urban Plan (GUP) of Roșia Montană commune to a specific modern concept of sustainable development that can provide the development of ecotourism activities, including agricultural and related services.

In this context, we urge the Romanian authorities to consider these options for sustainable development instead of Roșia Montană mining project, by creating and further implementing a development strategy based on ecotourism, and once more the protection of the area's natural and cultural resources, at European level.



ROSIA MONTANA PROJECT

The Rosia Montana project in figures

1346 hectares to be exploited, **2388 hectares** for which the company owns a licence, **300 hectares** covered by a tailings management pond of heavy metals and cyanide, which will permanently endanger more than **6000 people** from the neighbouring areas, **4 mountains** will be blasted away, **2064 private properties** will be relocated, **975 houses torn down**, out of which 41 houses are considered national heritage sites, **7 churches demolished**, blown up, or covered by the cyanide pond, **11 cemeteries** will be relocated, **12.000 tons of cyanide** used annually (a total of **240.000 tons** of cyanide) are needed and only **634 jobs** will be created over a period of **17 years**.¹

Environmental impact

The open cast mine at Rosia Montana would be the largest scale exploitation of its kind in Europe; here, they would be using 13 times more sodium cyanide than the entire quantity that is currently being used in Europe. Over the 17 years, 240.000 tons would be deployed in the industrial operation, i.e. the equivalent of 600.000.000.000 lethal doses for an adult. Four mountain massifs would be blasted away; the craters would have a diameter of over 8 km. The current village of Corna would be entirely covered by a tailings management pond, containing cyanide and heavy metals spread over 300 hectares. The stagnant cyanide would then be spread in the air as cyanhidric acid (which is what was used in Nazi concentration camps, albeit in higher doses), attaching itself to the dust particles and staying in the atmosphere for 1-3 years. The rock fill dam (made of compacted rock materials) would be 185 meters high and over 1 km in length. In Abrud, only 2 km downstream, there are over 6000 people living. Since the Baia Mare disaster in 2000, **at least 25 accidents**² caused by cyanide tailings have been reported throughout mining areas in the world. Two of these accidents took place in mines that have signed the International Cyanide Management Code, a voluntary initiative meant to reduce cyanide waste.

Community impact

The mining project proposed by RMGC cannot be implemented without relocating the entire community, sacrificing the majority of people's private properties, public spaces and the existing places of worship. **Rosia Montana, as we know it, will cease to exist.** The traumatic aspect of uprooted has been proven many times before. A project of this scale should have to demonstrate its public use to its citizens, which it failed to do in the case of Rosia Montana mining project. This project is a private one, implemented for individual profit, and despite its creating several hundreds of jobs, it cannot make up for the medium and long-term social and environmental impact.

National heritage impact

Rosia Montana is the oldest mining area that has been documented in Romania (1882 years old), with mines from Pre-Roman and Roman times, one of a kind in the world, as well as several monument-buildings, all from different historical periods. All of these archaeological and cultural values are good reasons for the area to be comprised in the tentative list of UNESCO heritage sites; a specific documentation³ has been compiled for this, and all that is needed is the signature of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.

Find out more at www.rosiamontana.org

1 <http://tinyurl.com/ProiectRMGC>

2 <http://www.rainforestinfo.org.au/gold/spills.htm>

3 <http://simpara.ro/Nota%20de%20fundamentare%20Lista%20tentativa%20Rosia%20Montana.pdf>