

Foreword

Public participation in decision-making and access to information lead to better decisions in terms of groundedness and quality. At the time of writing we are amidst the public consultation procedure for Gabriel's Rosia Montana gold/silver mine development. Sadly this procedure has proven; this at least to me, to be nothing other than a publicity event organised by and for the project owner. There is no space for dialogue; for the public to express their concerns so that the public authorities can take due account of these at the decision-making moment. The EIA report itself is overwhelming in terms of volume and discouraging in terms of accessibility and content.

In light of this I must confess that I am extremely proud of the determination expressed by many citizens who persisted in reading the documentation and insisted to make creative, innovative and important comments during the consultations.

The Rosia Montana mine proposal has been a major provocation to Romania's civil society; including the Romanian Academy due to the environmental, social, cultural, economic and juridical concerns associated with its development. Whilst it is questionable whether gold mining contributes to sustainable wealth creation, a multitude of examples from all over the world including Romania point to significant risks and costs for the host countries and its citizens. In many incidences these risks and costs become apparent only once a mine is operational but then the damage is done and governments often have little or no power for remedy.

In order to help decision-makers to enforce the precautionary principle and to remind them what is at stake, I am happy to endorse this report which is a first assessment of the Rosia Montana EIA report. Its aim is to explain some of the proposal's obvious uncertainties, shortcomings and to identify its true 'winners' and 'losers'. The views expressed belong to the individual authors. Hopefully their contribution will prepare the grounds for a fair and much needed dialogue on this subject.

If the voice of civil society counts and if the authorities thus refrain from endorsing this risky mine proposal, then this would prove to be a sign of maturity and responsible governance from the part of the decision-makers. This in return is a step our country is in dire need of in order to achieve the stability to move forwards.

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Bucharest, August 2006