



Group of the Progressive Alliance of
SOCIALISTS & DEMOCRATS
in the European Parliament

EUROPA NOSTRA, PRO PATRIMONIO and Daciana Sârbu MEP

invite you to a public hearing on

" ROSIA MONTANA in PERIL "

Tuesday, 30 November 2010 (10.00 – 17.00, including a hosted lunch)

at the Hotel Sheraton, Place Rogier 3, Brussels (Metro: Rogier)

Gabriel Resources, a Canadian mining company, plans to exploit what would be Europe's largest open-cast gold mine at Rosia Montana in Transylvania, Romania. Local heritage and environmental NGOs are campaigning against this project with the aim of saving the integrity and authenticity of the beautiful landscape and village of Rosia Montana and of its rich 2000 year old Roman mining heritage, from the feared destruction and pollution which would be the consequences of this large-scale gold mine.

Come and hear the arguments from different sides at this public hearing co-chaired by:

Daciana Sârbu (Romania), Member of the European Parliament

Denis de Kergorlay (France), Executive President of Europa Nostra

R.S.V.P. by 25 November 2010

Att. Louise van Rijckevorsel, Europa Nostra Brussels Office: bxl@europanostra.org
or Susana Dragomir, European Parliament: dacianaoctavia.sarbu@europarl.europa.eu

LIST OF SPEAKERS

Co-Chairs:

Daciana Sarbu (Romania), Member of the European Parliament

Denis de Kergorlay (France), Executive President of Europa Nostra

Speakers:

Academician Ionel Haiduc (Romania), President of the Romanian Academy: “General Introduction from the perspective of the Romanian Academy”

Stefan Balici & Virgil Apostol (Romania), ARA (Architecture, Restoration, Archaeology): “Rosia Montana’s possible nomination as a World Heritage Site”

Joel Bell (Canada), Senior Advisor, Rosia Montana Gold Corporation (RMGC)

Maria Berza (Romania), former Council member of Europa Nostra: “Towards a development strategy for Rosia Montana based on its cultural and natural assets”

Béatrice Cauuet (France), Archaeologist, CNRS, Université de Toulouse : “Mount Carnic’s universal heritage values”

Horia Ciugudean (Romania), Archaeologist: “Rosia Montana’s cultural values, a comparative analysis”

Adrian Gligor (Romania), Vice-President for the Heritage Programme, Rosia Montana Gold Corporation (RMGC)

Françoise Heidebroek (Belgium), Economist: “Economic feasibility of an alternative for Rosia Montana”

Andrew Jones (UK), Botanist and conservationist: “Rosia Montana's flora and fauna”

Robert Moran (USA), Geo-chemical and Hydro-geological consultant: “Impact on the environment of Rosia Montana”

Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailović (NL/Serbia), Secretary General of Europa Nostra: “European significance of the Rosia Montana Campaign”

ROSIA MONTANA IN PERIL - A SHORT INTRODUCTION

1. **Europa Nostra**, the Voice of Cultural Heritage in Europe (based in The Hague), and its member organisation **Pro Patrimonio**, the National Trust of Romania (based in Bucharest), have long campaigned to save the cultural heritage - both built and natural - of the Rosia Montana area from being severely affected by the open-cast gold mine project proposed by the Rosia Montana Gold Corporation (RMGC), a Canadian-based company which is 80% privately owned and 20% publicly owned by the Romanian government. The Rosia Montana open-cast mine would be the largest in Europe and would be in operation during an expected period of not longer than 16 years.

2. By organising the public hearing on “**Rosia Montana in Peril**” on 30 November 2010 in Brussels, Europa Nostra and Pro Patrimonio, with the support of Daciana Sarbu, MEP from Romania, wish to put a spotlight on this unique and invaluable part of Europe’s cultural heritage and landscape which is currently seriously under threat. By gathering experts in the field from both sides of the argument, we are encouraging a true Europe-wide debate on this emblematic case where a large area of built and natural heritage and the local communities within, may be sacrificed for short-term economic benefits.

3. **The Rosia Montana Gold Corporation (RMGC) claims that the mine will benefit the local region and Romania as a whole by:**
 - a) creating jobs and generating economic profits;
 - b) ensuring the necessary clean-up of high levels of pollution left from past mines;
 - c) guaranteeing higher-than-required environmental and safety standards; and
 - d) investing in the rehabilitation of the local heritage and in the creation of a mining museum.

4. **The opposition to the proposed gold-mining project points out that this project will:**
 - a) “decapitate” three mountains (in addition to a fourth mountain which has already been reduced in size in a previous Romanian state-owned mining operation) to create four huge open-cast mines with the aim to extract gold (an estimated amount of 10,000,000 ounces) from the vast quantities of low-grade gold ore (257,000,000 tons) the mine would remove;
 - b) fill the adjacent valley with massive amounts of cyanide-laced tailings, to be stored open-air behind a dam that will rise to a maximum height of 185 metres (the equivalent of a 60-storey building);
 - c) disfigure the setting of, and overwhelm the villages in the gold mine's catchment area;
 - d) irrevocably damage the landscape and pollute the area for ever more, thus removing the heritage which may be salvaged from any meaningful context; and
 - e) preclude the area from potential development as a destination for cultural tourism.

5. Before getting the government's approval for the proposed start of the gold-mining project, RMGC has to fulfill the following two legal obligations:

a) to undertake archaeological research over the area affected by the project (obligation imposed by national law);

Archaeological research carried out between 1999 and 2007 and which was financed by RMGC, revealed the existence of "a vast underground mining park from Antiquity". In the case of Mount Carnic, only a very small area was researched, yet all of it was granted an "Archaeological Discharge Certificate" in 2006. Challenged in court by a group of NGO opponents, the certificate was annulled without recourse to appeal by the Supreme Court, the reason given being the exceptional value of the heritage which would be destroyed.

b) to prepare an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report (obligation imposed by EU law);

In 2006 the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report (33 volumes with a total of 4500 pages) was submitted by RMGC to the Romanian Minister for the Environment, giving rise to a process of ministerial examination and public consultation. This process was summarily stopped by the then Minister for the Environment in 2007.

In addition, a group of NGO opponents commissioned an independent US-based consultant, Robert Moran, to review RMGC's EIA. Copies of Robert Moran's most critical Review of the EIA report were sent to RMGC and the relevant government departments.

It is expected that the EIA review process will resume shortly.

6. Rosia Montana, a future World Heritage Site?

Mr Hunor Kelemen, the Romanian Minister of Culture proposed to consider submitting Rosia Montana and its surroundings for inscription on UNESCO's World Heritage List as the most intact example of more than 2000 years of mining activities, dating back to the Alburnus Maior of Roman times.

The Minister of Culture also invited an international group of distinguished archaeologists to visit Rosia Montana and prepare an independent and authoritative evaluation of Mount Carnic, thus producing an expert report which would establish the international significance of Carnic and Rosia Montana as a whole. Such a report would constitute important evidence to be taken into consideration during any future procedure related to the proposed nomination of Rosia Montana area for inscription on UNESCO's World Heritage List and also during the examination of any future requests for an "Archaeological Discharge Certificate" for the area.