

MiningWatchSEE, Romania: Greens vs Eldorado Gold, appeal to Environment Ministry for inspection of environmental impact assessments

Mining Watch Romania network recently reported on nonconformity of the environmental impact assessment for the mining project in Certeju de Sus commune with the relevant Community based legislation, and requested from relevant Ministry the cumulative environmental impact assessment for all mining projects held by Eldorado Gold in the same area of Apuseni Mountains, envisaged to operate simultaneously.

To support this request MWR stated following aspects:

The gold mine at Certej would be the first cyanide gold mining operation opened in Romania. The mining project is held by Eldorado Gold through its subsidiary Deva Gold and is currently at the mining

site construction stage. The project footprint has 456.2 ha, currently covered by forests, pastures, agricultural land and residential areas. A significant part of the project is located in the Natura 2000 site -

ROSPA 0132 Metaliferi Mountains. The mine, having an estimated annual output of 3 million tonnes, requires deforestation of 187 ha to locate two open pit mines and two TMFs. The tailings dams, with 169 m high and 70 m high rockfill dams respectively, are an additional issue of concern as they will be located in the close vicinity of several densely populated villages: Hondol, Bocşa Mică and Certej.

Eldorado Gold holds four other mining perimeters in the proximity of the Certej mining project: Băița-Crăciunești, Certej Nord, Troița Pițiguș and Mireș. From a topographic point of view all these perimeters are perfectly adjacent, as shown by the perimeters' map, and their cumulated surface of 4,865 hectares is two times larger than the Roșia Montană lease which totalled 2,388 hectares. According to the technical data provided by Eldorado Gold themselves, the four adjacent perimeters are not meant to become distinct mining projects, but they are actually different extension stages of the initial mining project at Certej developed by accessing new deposit sections while using the same technological infrastructure (processing plant, TMFs etc.).

Nevertheless the cyanide mining project at Certej was granted the environmental permit no. 8 of 05.07.2012, revised on 28.11.2013, by the Environmental Protection Agency Hunedoara, without any cumulative environmental impact assessment for all its operating stages as described above. On the contrary, the project owner has deliberately split the environmental impact assessment. Distinct assessment procedures are currently ongoing for each operating stage separately, in the absence of any legal request from the competent environmental authority to assess the cumulated environmental impact of all operating stages of the mining project.

To support the previous statement it should be mentioned that, a few months after having

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obtained the revised environmental agreement for the Certej mining project, the same company Eldorado Gold, through its subsidiary European Goldfields Deva SRL, applied for an environmental permit for Băița Crăciunești mine, Teascu deposit. However the Technical Report for Băița Crăciunești indicates that for the Certej and Băița-Crăciunești perimeters Eldorado Gold will use the same processing plant, the same tailings dams and the same access road network.

Based on the above data we can only conclude that Eldorado Gold, with support from the environmental authorities who issued the permits for the Certej mining project, has artificially split the environmental

impact assessment for this project to avoid thus an overall environmental impact assessment for all project development stages. The environmental agreement for Certej project was thus issued by evading the provisions of Order 135/2010 of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, which provides under Art. 5 that in the case of investments developed in several stages or on land plots located on the territory of several adjacent administrative units, the environmental impact assessment shall be performed for the whole investment.

At the same time, by splitting the environmental impact assessment for a mining operation covering 4,865 ha Eldorado Gold has also evaded the competence of the Ministry of Environment for assessing the environmental impact and issuing environmental agreements for mining projects.

Such artificially split environmental impact assessment procedures have been subject to notifications from the European Union Court of Justice, which determined that the European environmental impact assessment Directive can only reach its objective by a cumulative assessment of projects in an area, not by the separate assessment of each project.

source: MiningWatchRomania