

Romania; The Baia Mare Cyanide Disaster reaches Top 13 Human-caused Environmental Horrors

A rupture from a defective dam containing gold and copper mining “tailings” sent tons of heavy metal wastes and around 120,000 cubic meters of water saturated with cyanide into the Somes, Tisza and Danube rivers on the 30th of January, 2000. Massive loss of aquatic life was documented, especially in neighboring Hungary and Serbia. The operation was controlled by the Australian-Romanian joint venture AURUL, located in Baia Mare, Romania. The parent company, Esmeralda Exploration, blamed heavy snowfall for the failed dam. Due to a speedy response by the Romanian government, no casualties were reported (although some children were sickened from eating fish from the contaminated rivers). Test of river water and sediments after the accident, found cyanide levels between 300 and 700 times above pollution standards. Copper and zinc concentrations also exceeded by many times “safe” pollution thresholds.

Source: energyworldmag