

In February 2015, oil and gas industry giant Chevron announced that they were suspending plans to begin fracking in Romania. But the fight for a ban on fracking in the country is far from over. Romanian anti-fracking activist Marina Stefan shares an update on the state of shale gas exploration in her country, and what the future of drilling in Romania could look like.

#### New Players, New Fracking Permits

Despite Chevron's retreat from fracking in Romania this past February, there is still an interest from the corporation and others to pursue the exploitation of our country's natural resources. The ANRM (National Authority for Mineral Resources) has issued at least 16 permits for the exploration of shale gas to Chevron, NIS-Gazprom, MOL-Hungary, East West Petroleum, Clara Petroleum, Universal Premium and ADX.

#### Chevron's Retreat

Chevron has ceased its activities for the exploration and exploitation for shale gas in the village of Pungesti, but continues to hold a license and all the necessary documents and permits for exploration and exploitation in the perimeter, especially in the nearby village of Puiesti. Despite the fact that Chevron declared that it will withdraw from Romania, its lawyers are struggling in court to safeguard the company's license.

#### Western Perimeters, Gazprom Enters the Scene

Romania's western perimeters are leased to several companies interested in pursuing the exploration and exploitation of shale gas. But with the exception of prospections done by a Serbian company contracted by NIS Petrol (Gazprom), there has been little to no activity. Local people have become involved in the issues and community groups have formed to organize protests, confront the authorities and take legal action against the abusive prospections, which were done without previously consulting the local communities. The situation has calmed down but the people are standing by to take action again if necessary.

#### Civic and Legal Action

There is currently little civic action concerning Romania's western perimeters, as the companies have yet to make their intentions visible. However, several court trials have been initiated by local environmental NGOs and are ongoing. One of the most significant decisions thus far is the one taken by the Supreme Court, which states that shale gas is regulated by the national oil law in a general sense, though it admitted the fact that the law however excludes shale gas by explicitly defining natural gas and failing to include resources similar to shale gas in the definition, as NGO representatives have argued in many other trials.

There are also three drafted laws for banning shale gas exploitation through hydraulic

fracturing but two have been rejected by the Senate and the scenario that such a law would pass is highly unlikely.

#### Public and political discourse

Despite the fact that just a few months ago shale gas was supposed to be the key to our energy independence, our politicians have abandoned the subject. They've used the drop in oil prices to justify shifting their attention away from shale gas .

source: [globalfrackdown.org](http://globalfrackdown.org)