

Romania mining: Bankwatch Romania halts Oltenia energy complex deforestation for mining expansion

Bankwatch Romania is active in mining and forestry issues, especially in a case that is called “deforestation for lignite”.

The expansion of lignite mining over an area of 700 hectares is planned by the Oltenia Energy Complex without an environmental permit; these permits have been issued only for the deforestation of these areas, without assessing the cumulative environmental impacts and without conducting a proper public participation procedure. In 2015, Bankwatch Romania and Greenpeace Romania have obtained in court the cancellation of four environmental permits for the deforestation of 291 hectares of forest in Gorj to extend quarries that would supply the Rovinari lignite power-plant.

To some extent a related case is the one of the Reci Sawmill where the project was approved without undergoing an EIA procedure. The Reci Local Council and the Covasna County Council refused to communicate to the public the relevant documentation for this project. Together with Neuer Weg Association, Bankwatch Romania sought legal action for the suspension and cancellation of the respective permits and the case is still ongoing.