

Mining Watch Romania Network launches the media project “Resource Grabbers” with a first interactive map on resource grabbing at Certej by the mining company Eldorado Gold (TSX:ELD) through its subsidiaries Deva Gold SA and European Goldfields SRL.

Certej is the best known mining project held by Eldorado Gold, facing both local and national opposition. The company has resumed the construction site arrangement works in the area based on a new construction permit issued after the one obtained in October 2014 was declared illegal by the State Inspectorate for Constructions and cancelled by the Hunedoara Court of Justice[1]. The rapid progress of the Certej project would not be possible without the blameworthy support from the Mayor of Certeju de Sus commune and the complicit ease of the National Agency for Mineral Resources in conceding new areas to the same company. Eldorado Gold holds a total of 4,591 hectares only in the southern area of Metaliferi Mountains. The total surface equals that of a city like Târgu Mureş, Arad, Bacău or Deva.

During the last years Eldorado Gold has almost doubled the surface held in the area, having now five sites under concession: Certej, Sălişte Hondol, Băiţa Crăciuneşti, Certej Nord and Troiţa Piţigus. Although Eldorado Gold presents these concessions as distinct projects, the map prepared by Mining Watch Romania shows that they are actually a single unitary project. For instance the scale of Certej project extends beyond the boundaries of the original concession. For this reason the sister company European Goldfields Deva SRL applied for and obtained from ANRM the Sălişte Hondol perimeter in 2010. This is the envisaged location of the two TMFs, one for toxic tailings and the other one for cyaniding, provided by Deva Gold SA within the Certej mining project.

Moreover in 2011 Eldorado Gold obtained from ANRM a mining permit for Băiţa-Crăciuneşti, Teascu deposit. Eldorado claimed that Băiţa Crăciuneşti is a stand-alone mining project and did not resume the environmental assessment for the new extended project. The Environmental Protection Agency accepted this without questioning, notwithstanding that the same gold processing plant and the same tailings ponds would be used for Băiţa Crăciuneşti.

Eldorado Gold learned from the mistakes made by Gabriel Resources. Although they hold much larger concessions than those at Roşia Montană, they apply for permitting for separate sections which are actually part of a huge puzzle.

“All state authorities contribute to the start of gold mining at Certej, in a gigantic project covering 4,591 hectares, twice the size of Roşia Montană project[3]. In this case the citizens’ public interest for a clean environment and the respect for private property are fully ignored, all that matters is the interest of Eldorado Gold. What is even more serious is

that the project permitting is done at county level, with the central institutions being not at all interested in what happens in the region”, said Roxana Pencea, representative of Mining Watch Romania network.

“When assessing the environmental impact of a project it is not acceptable to divide it into smaller parts to avoid its assessment as a whole. Nevertheless Eldorado Gold resorts to this scheme to obtain the permits for Certej mining operation more easily, and will perform simplified extension procedures in the future. It is very likely that the Certej mining operation assessed as a whole would have too high an environmental impact to be authorised. We are thus facing a classical example of eluding the law”, said Oana Poenaru, legal team coordinator at Mining Watch Romania network.

source: miningwatch.ro