

NGOs Bankwatch Romania and Greenpeace launched a new report, “Just transition in Hunedoara - Economic diversification in a fair and sustainable manner”, outlining scenarios for the post-coal development of Romania’s best known coal region, the Jiu Valley, and highlighting that job growth and economic development without coal are very much possible in the region.

The alternative scenarios, prepared by the Romanian Center for Economic Policies - Cerope, focus on the development of three main economic sectors: agriculture, industry and services. The analysis shows that, if alternative development scenarios are implemented, thousands of jobs and hundreds of millions of euros can be generated in the region by 2030 - 750 jobs and 88 million euros net profits can be created over the next decade in small-scale farming and animal raising; 1520 jobs and 31 million euros in renewables and energy efficiency; and 434 jobs and 38 million euros profits in tourism and other services.

The analysis comes at a time when the EU’s Platform for Coal Regions in Transition is paying special attention to the Jiu Valley, this year a focus region for the Platform, and when national authorities are gearing up to prepare a regional development strategy for the region in view of deploying resources from the next EU budget (2021-2027).

“The EU Coal Platform represents a great opportunity to create jobs in the Jiu Valley, but in order for these new jobs to be sustainable and well-paid, Romanian authorities need to get seriously involved with retraining and creating the necessary infrastructure,” said Alexandru Mustata from Bankwatch Romania.

The report highlights the need for state authorities to prepare the ground for alternative development of the coal region by investing in retraining programmes for the workers, increasing connectivity of the region, strengthening the public administration, prioritising investment areas and facilitating cooperation among local actors.

“Our ambition is to see the Romanian Ministry of European Funds use this analysis when defining the development strategy for the Jiu Valley. The report indicates clearly that the region’s most valuable resources do not lie underground. The Jiu Valley is well-suited for the development of small scale farming, renewable energy projects and tourism,” said Vlad Catuna, campaign coordinator at Greenpeace Romania.

During the launch event of the analysis, taking place September 23 in Lupeni, one of the main mining towns in the Jiu Valley, four mayors from the region joined an earlier commitment by local leaders to work together for just transition in the Jiu Valley (a memorandum of understanding was already signed by six Jiu Valley mayors this July in Brussels).

Source: bankwatch.org

