

PD-L and PSD reject bill to ban cyanide in mining

Bucharest, 12 March 2008 - Today at the official meeting of the Deputy Chamber's Commission for Industry and Services the PNL (National Liberal Party) fraction voted in favor of the bill to ban the use of cyanide in mining.

The parliamentary groups PD-L (Liberal-Democratic Party) and PSD (Social Democratic Party) voted against the bill; meaning that cyanide may continue to be used in gold mining.

Today's vote took place after a long period during which both PD-L and PSD postponed to take a decision and after a tentative to introduce a series of un-authored amendments which would have completely changed the sense of the bill.

The PD-L and PSD deputies repeatedly refused to assume parenthood for these amendments and instead tried to create the false impression that these had been created by the commission as a whole.

The government's arguments as well as those of the PNL deputies regarding the increased level of danger for using this technology including the serious accidents that it provoked (Baia Mare 2002) did not convince the social and liberal democrats.

Numerous non-governmental organizations including Greenpeace, Alburnus Maior, the Independent Centre for the Development of Environmental Resources, the Partnership Foundation as well as many citizens came forward to support this bill.

On a global scale over 25 cyanide accidents in mining took place between 1998 and 2006 which is why in recent years numerous states have banned or outlawed the use of cyanide in precious metal mining.

In Romania in 2000 an extremely serious accident occurred at a gold processing plant when cyanide accidentally escaped into the Danube and Tisza river systems and provoked the death of millions of tones of fish.

In light of these conditions both the government as well as Romania's National Liberal Party have in recent times increased their policies on environmental protection including the promotion of this bill in order to create the conditions for a cleaner Romania in which everybody wants to live.

The National Liberal Party will support the bill to ban cyanide in mining in the final voting plenary; this even more so given that it would impact numerous mine proposal in the Apuseni Mountains.

Last but not least one needs to consider that it would have been a responsible decision from the part of the Industry Commission to ban cyanide in mining given that viable alternatives already exist.

Mircea Ciopraga MP

Vice-President of the Deputy Chamber Commission for Industry and Services

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For more information contact Petre Bogan - Councilor of Mircea Ciopraga MP - on +40 721440524, +40 214021070 or via email at mciopraga@cdep.ro