

ROMANIA

Heritage at Risk in Roşia Montana

In spite of all protests (see *Heritage at Risk* 2002/2003, pp. 175/176) the cultural heritage in Roşia Montana is still very much at risk.

According to the plans of Roşia Montana Gold Corporation 331 tons of gold and 1600 tons of silver are meant to be exploited in the region of Roşia Montana in the next 17 years. The open-air mining process would destroy the greatest part of the town as well as several cultural monuments. The Roman and medieval mining galleries of several kilometres length are of outstanding value. Only the medieval centre of Roşia Montana (Hungarian name Verespatak) with its three churches and some buildings from the 18th century or earlier would remain on the shore of a 180 m deep artificial lake filled with cyanides, which threaten the valley of the Maros and the Tisza. The new settlement for the people of Roşia Montana would be situated above the Roman mining settlement Alburnus Maior. The archaeological excavations of the previous years could not bring everything to the light. On the contrary, they proved the extraordinary richness of the site, which would perish completely.

ICOMOS issued two resolutions about the case of Roşia Montana at its General Assemblies in Madrid 2002 and Victoria Falls

2003. These emphasised the responsibility of the decision-makers for the dangerous situation. The ICOMOS congress in Pécs (40 Years of the Venice Charter, 22–27 May 2004) reiterated its concerns about this matter and called upon all authorities to take further steps in order to save both the cultural and the natural heritage in Roşia Montana:

ICOMOS rejects the investment of the new gold mine of Roşia Montana (Romania). This dangerous technology threatens the natural heritage of the site and the fauna and flora of the rivers Maros and Tisza, as well as the cultural heritage of the old mines used from Prehistoric through Roman and Middle Ages, endangers equipment of the old mining technology as well as 18th-century architectural heritage of the small mining town. The new residential area offered for the inhabitants of the old town would annihilate the remains of the original Roman settlement, Alburnus Maior.

Despite two resolutions of ICOMOS about this case, preparations for the investment are still going on. ICOMOS demands to stop the investment immediately.

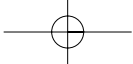
Pécs, 27 May 2004

Roşia Montana, 17th-century stone breaking mill



Roşia Montana, Catholic church





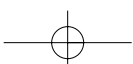
Roşia Montana, main square

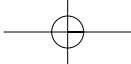


Roşia Montana, Roman gallery

Roşia Montana, historic monument, property of Roşia Montana Gold Corporation

Roşia Montana, old crucifix





Roşia Montana, old house



Roşia Montana, property of Gabriel Resources

Roşia Montana, Roman gallery



Roşia Montana, main street

Roşia Montana, mine entrance

