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al Parlamento europeo

The Green/EFA Group in the European Parliament
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Use of Cyanide in gold mining in Bulgaria and Romania and other member states

De Groen: "I prefer a bright future rather than a golden one"

Gold mining projects are currently taking place in Bulgaria and Romania which use cyanide-based technologies. Cyanide is highly toxic. The mining of gold using cyanide causes permanent damage to surrounding ecosystems and has devastating consequences on human health. Commenting on this, **Els de Groen**, MEP of the Green/EFA Group said:

"Annually mankind mines 2500 tons of gold; 2000 tons are mined using cyanide. Gold mining using cyanide leaves us with 180.000 tons of waste annually, which needs to be stored carefully due to the highly toxic nature of the compound. One teaspoon of a 2 % solution can kill a human being. Who would like to wear a bracelet, broche or watch produced with such an extremely dangerous poison?"

In Bulgaria plans have been proposed by Dundee Precious Metals for the use of cyanide upon the opening a new mine near Krumovgrad and in the Chelopech gold mine. In the region of the Roşia Montana in Romania there are also plans to use cyanide based technologies for gold-extraction. The Roşia Montana Gold Corporation (RMGC) project is expected to result in the largest surface mine in Europe (3700 ha), involving the use of more than 200 000 tonnes of cyanide for gold extracting purposes. In Brussels we are forced to cope with a strong business lobby but the people living in the endangered areas still remember the serious accident involving cyanide in 2005 that is suspected to have contaminated the Hungarian part of the Tisza River.

In case of spills and accidents, the poison would be spread by rivers like the Arda, Maritza/Evros, Mures, Tisza and Danube which would subsequently lead to severe consequences for the surrounding countries like Greece, Hungary, Serbia and Turkey. For this reason some countries, like the Czech Republic and Germany have started banning the use of cyanide-based technologies in gold mining. I urge the member state governments to follow their example."

