

BAIA MARE TASK FORCE

Tom Garvey
Chairman

Brussels,
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STATEMENT FROM THE BAIA MARE TASK FORCE

As part of its mandate, the Baia Mare Task Force was given the task of publishing an *Inventory of High Risk Sites* in the mining, extractive and ore-processing industries in the Tizsa river basin.

These sites use dams and 'tailings ponds' to store mining wastes and sludges which can contain heavy metals and other toxic substances used in the mining and processing of metal ores. If these sites are poorly designed or maintained, they can pose a serious threat of significant pollution into river systems, either due to chronic leakage or catastrophic dam failure during periods of bad weather. While some of these plants are still in operation, many sites have been abandoned and may be in a poor state of repair.

The Ministers of Environment of Romania, Hungary, Slovakia and Ukraine met on 3rd April this year, and agreed to undertake the task of preparing such an inventory. This has been conducted under the auspices of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR). The resulting list covers a wider range of 'hotspots' than solely those in the mining and extractive industries. Nevertheless, for those sites identified within the mining, extractive and ore-processing industries, the Baia Mare Task Force has sought assurances from each Government that, commencing immediately, the following actions will be taken at each site by the competent authorities of each country :

- Each site will be inspected by suitably qualified personnel and a safety/risk assessment made;
- Hydro-meteorological data for each site will be re-evaluated in order to ensure that tailings ponds and lagoons are designed to cope with extreme weather events;
- Assessments will be made of the structural capacity of the tailings dams and impoundments to withstand extreme precipitation and snowmelt events;
- Immediate steps to improve safety will be carried out where these are deemed necessary;
- Operational and accident/emergency procedures will be reviewed and improved where necessary at both a facility and local administration level;
- All sites, will immediately be placed under regular surveillance - this will include, in respect to abandoned sites, daily inspection and tests in times of adverse weather conditions.

To date we have received assurances from the Ministers of Environment in Romania, Hungary and Slovakia that they will undertake these actions.

These actions are short-term measures to minimise the risks of accidents/spillages in the year ahead. In its report to be published at the end of this year, the Baia Mare Task Force will be making recommendations for the improvement of existing legislation, at both national and international level, to strengthen the environmental regulation of the mining, extractive and ore-processing industries in Europe.

As in all listings, the possibility exists that some high-risk sites may not – for one reason or another – be listed. In those cases, we have asked that the measures listed above also be taken in respect of such sites.

A full copy of the Inventory and a map indicating the location of the sites may be found at the following web-sites :

<http://www.cian.hu/doc/hotspots.htm>

<http://www.tisaforum.org.yu>

Tom Garvey
Chairman of the Baia Mare Task Force

Quotation :

Tom Garvey, Chairman of the Baia Mare Task Force noted *‘the preparation and publication of this inventory represents an important first step in the identification and management of potential environmental risks in the region. We welcome the positive response that we have received from the governments in the region and encourage them to make every effort to ensure that such accidents do not occur in the future’.*

Editors note :

The International Task Force for the Assessment of the Baia Mare Accident (Baia Mare Task Force) was established by the governments of Romania and Hungary, the European Commission and the United Nations. Its remit is to review the mining accidents that occurred earlier this year at Baia Mare and Baia Borsa in Romania and to arrive at a considered and consensual conclusion as to :

- What happened and why ;
- The environmental and socio-economic impacts of the accidents ;
- Measures that could be taken to reduce the risks of such accidents occurring in the future.

The Baia Mare Task Force will produce its report during December this year.

The Baia Mare Task Force is headed by an independent Chairman and contains representatives from the Romanian Ministry of Waters, Forests and Environmental Protection, the Hungarian Ministry of Environment, the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River Basin, WWF-International, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the European Commission.

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Sites identified in the Inventory as ‘high-risk’ in the mining, extractive and ore processing industries (presented in ARS map number order) :

Romania

Somes-Tisza sub-basin

- SC AURUL SA (pond), ARS map no. 2
- SM BORSA (Colbu pond), ARS map no. 3
- SM NOVAT (Novat pond), ARS map no. 4
- SM BAIA MARE UP Central Flotation Unit, UP Sasar (pond), ARS map no. 5
- SC AURUL SA (pond), ARS map no. 2
- SM BAIA MARE – EM Baia Sprie (pond), ARS map no. 7
- SM BAIA MARE – EM Cavnic (pond), ARS map no. 8
- EM AURUM – Ilba Sector, ARS map no. 9
- SM BAIA MARE – EM Herja, ARS map no. 10
- CMNPN REMIN BAIA MARE – EM Turt (pond), ARS map no. 11
- EM AURUM – Nistru Section, ARS map no. 12
- CMNPN REMIN SA BAIA MARE – Mining Subsidiary Rodna (pond), ARS map no. 13
- SM BAIA MARE – EM Baiut (pond), ARS map. No. 14
- SC COMINEX NEMETALIFERE SA – Mining Subsidiary Aghires (ponds), ARS map no. 16

Crisuri sub-basin

- CNCAF Minvest, SC Devamin SA, Branch Mine Brad – UP Gurabarza, Râbita Pond, ARS map no. 18
- CNCAF Minvest, SC Devamin SA, Branch Mine Băita – UP Băita, Fânate Pond, ARS map no. 19

Mures sub-basin

- EM ABRUD (pond), ARS map no. 21
- EM Roşia Montană (pond), ARS map no. 22
- EM Baia de Arieş (pond), ARS map no. 23
- EM Coranda Certej (pond), ARS map no. 24

Ukraine

- Zakarpatskyi polymetallic industrial complex, State, (not included on ARS map)

Slovakia

- Želba š.p. 02 Siderit, Rožňava, ARS map no.1

Hungary

- HIDROTECH Bányászati – és Környezetvédelmi Kft., ÁPV Rt, Gyöngyösorosi, ARS map no. 5