

Press Release

Listing of historic buildings under threat by destructive actions of Roşia Montană Gold Corporation

The Association “Architecture. Restoration. Archaeology” (ARA) requested, at the Alba County Office for Culture, Religious Affairs and National Cultural Heritage (Direcţia Judeţeană pentru Cultură, Culte şi Patrimoniul Cultural Naţional / DJCCPCN), the listing of 50 significant buildings and ensembles – traditional houses, churches, public edifices (the old school, the old town hall, the headquarters of the mining company, the old maternity ward) – from villages of *Roşia Montană* and *Corna* as historic monuments.

These requests were submitted on September 27th and October 9th at the offices of DJCCPCN Alba, the local office of the Ministry for Culture and Religious Affairs (Ministerul Culturii şi Cultelor / MCC) in County Alba. This institution is now obliged to immediately initiate the listing procedure for the respective buildings, to prepare the listing files and to submit them for assessment to the National Commission for Historic Monuments. According to the law the buildings are already granted the status of historic monuments during this process. This implies, in the first place, the interdiction to dismantle them, to destroy them totally or partly or to deteriorate them. The owners of these buildings now have the obligation to maintain and conserve them and to obtain permits from MCC for any construction works on any of these properties. Most of these houses are owned by Roşia Montană Gold Corporation (RMGC).

The scope of this action – to acknowledge the value of these buildings and to ensure their protection – also includes a further important aspect: to prevent the destruction of these buildings in particular and of the villages of Roşia Montană and Corna more generally by the ‘clearing’ activities carried out by the mining company. At Roşia Montană and the neighbouring areas of Corna, Bunta, Țarina, Blideşti and Bălmoşeşti, RMGC has already destroyed more than 120 of the 138 buildings for which it obtained demolition permits from the Mayor’s Office of Roşia Montană. In most of these cases the permits were issued in an illegal manner: *all* houses demolished in Roşia Montană were included in protection areas of listed historic monuments. This would normally imply, in each case, the existence of the accept of MCC and the transferral of responsibility to grant the demolition permit to Alba County Council. In all these cases, over 80 (!), the Mayor’s Office of Roşia Montană exceeded its legal function. Moreover, all these demolition works are taking place prior to RMGC having been able to secure the necessary permits to initiate their mining project.

Extremely worrying is the coincidence of the precipitated demolition, just a few days after the submission of the first listing requests by ARA, of one of the houses subject to the petitions: Şuluţiu House (built in 1897, situated at no.193, Roşia Montană), a building of great value, both historic, architectural and urbanistic. Its demolition permit, illegally issued in 2005, had since long expired!

ARA is a non-governmental organization active in the field of protection and enhancement of cultural heritage. Since 2000 its members have been actively involved in researching and protecting the historic site of Roşia Montană. The Association will continue to monitor this case and identify measures for protecting the exceptional cultural heritage of this site. ARA will also disclose any offending of the heritage at Roşia Montană and will alert the competent authorities to prevent the destruction of this site or of any part of it.

The listing requests, which comprise the general rationale and the specific reasons for each case, as well as recent images of the buildings, can be consulted on ARA's website, at: www.simpapa.ro, section „Asociație”, chapter „Monumente în pericol” (available only in Romanian).

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