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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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Gold mining projects – a danger to human rights, the rule of law and ecological integrity

Motion for a resolution
tabled by Mr Andrej HUNKO and other members of the Assembly

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

The Parliamentary Assembly has repeatedly engaged in questions on mining projects which cause serious problems (Doc. 10825; Doc. 12515; Doc. 12361). The rise of the gold price and the economic downturn in the aftermath of the banking crisis of 2007 led to intensified and new efforts to start gold mining projects in several member States, among others in Romania, Greece and Turkey.

Gold mining involves the destruction of landscapes and the contamination of land as well as people. Regularly there are claims of corruption and violations of national or international legislation. When protest movements develop to criticise these problems and to stop the project politically, they represent a valuable part of a democratic society that must be accepted. Nevertheless there are reports on Greece that accuse police and counterterrorism office of brutally combating demonstrations, arresting people and taking their DNA without legal basis, and intimidating the population in other ways that violate human rights. The Greek authorities were called by Amnesty International to conduct an investigation but remained silent.

The extraction by gold-cyanidation is extremely harmful to the environment and the people. The European Court of Human Rights has judged in several cases that a company poisoning the local environment can get into the scope of Article 8 of the European Convention of Human Rights. The use of cyanide has to be ended by 2018 following an European Union directive. Consequently no new mines should be opened based on the cyanidation method.

The Assembly should support the discussions about gold mining projects. The interest for short term revenue should be compared with the irretrievable destruction of natural landscapes and archeological heritage, the poisoning of people and nature, and the long-term costs including the negative effects on agriculture and tourism.

Signed (see overleaf)

Signed[1]*:*

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1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EDG: European Democrat Group
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialist Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left
NR: Representatives not belonging to a Political Group