

Commissioner Stavros Dimas
Commissioner for Environment
European Commission
Rue de la Loi, 200
Bruxelles 1049

15 February 2006

Dear Commissioner Dimas,

Re: Gold mining at the Ada Tepe site in Krumovgrad, Bulgaria

I am writing to you regarding the proposed gold mining development in Krumovgrad in South-East Bulgaria. This unique area in Bulgaria has been identified as a potential Natura 2000 site by the Bulgarian Ministry of the Environment. It comprises valuable oak forests and semi-natural grasslands (identified as a habitat of Community interest in Annex 1 of directive 92/43/EEC), and wealth of different species, including land tortoises (identified as a species of Community interest in Annex 2 of directive 92/43/EEC), all of which would be at risk should the proposed development be allowed to go ahead.

As well as threatening the natural environment and biodiversity, the proposed mine would destroy a number of sites of cultural importance, including historic monuments from the Thracian, Roman and medieval times.

Opposition to the mine is great, both in the immediate area of Krumovgrad and further afield. Locals are concerned that the proposed gold mine would not only displace the local population and damage their cultural and environmental heritage, but would also pose a threat to the health of large numbers of people, due to the method of cyanide leaching used in the process of gold extraction. Cyanide is highly toxic and can persist in the environment for many years. Seepage from tailings pits can contaminate groundwater, and accidents and spills have the potential to cause extensive pollution of local waterways - which would also affect communities in neighbouring Greece and Turkey.

In light of the Habitats Directive; the Commission's commitments to the 2010 targets on Biodiversity; the renewed attention to sustainable development with the review of the Sustainable Development Strategy, I would urge the Commission to call for the Bulgarian Ministry of the Environment to publicly and permanently reject the proposal for a gold mine in Krumovgrad. The reported "silent" upholding of the views of local campaigners and rejection of the proposed project by the Bulgarian Minister for the Environment is simply not enough -especially in light of the detrimental effects the

project would have on the environment in the Member State Greece and candidate country Turkey, as well as in Bulgaria itself.

I am also sending a copy of this letter to Commissioner Rehn, in view of Bulgaria's proposed accession to the EU in 2007.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Caroline Lucas'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Caroline Lucas MEP