

**Question for written answer E-002321/2014
to the Commission**

Rule 117

Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)

Subject: Violation of EU legislation by adopting the EIA of the planned gold mine in Breznik, Bulgaria

In Bulgaria, the Pernik Regional Inspectorate of Environment and Water (RIEW) approved the investment proposal of the company 'Trace Resources EOOD' for the extraction and processing of gold ore deposits in the municipality of Breznik.

The project provides for the ore to be extracted from underground. The entire complex will extend over 2 200 acres and will include a 220-acre tailing pond. The forecast annual production is 300 000 tons of ore and 45 to 50 tons of concentrate. Mining will continue for 11 years.

RIEW's decision was taken without assessment of the present health status of the populations of the settlements situated near to the prospective mine (Breznik, Slakovtzi, Babitza, Viskyar, Arzan, Vidritza, Noevtzi, Konskja and Rezantzi). Such assessment was recommended by the Regional Health Inspectorate. The recommendation was based on the requirements of the public health legislation in force and on Directives 2011/92/EU (EIA Directive) and 2001/42/EC (SEA Directive).

Instead, the RIEW approved the environmental impact assessment (EIA), which contained an assessment of the present health status of the population of the city of Pernik (situated 20 km from the planned mine). The 'conclusion' was that the health status of this city's population is 'bad', but no specific data were presented. Such a poor and inadequate EIA leaves no room for future substantiated criticism and comparative studies.

What measures will the Commission take to ensure the implementation of the relevant EU legislation by the Bulgarian authorities and to demand the preparation of full-scale and well-documented EIAs in the future?