

**Question for written answer P-006951/2013
to the Commission
Rule 117
Erik Bánki (PPE)**

Subject: Mining projects in the Carpathian Basin using cyanidation technology

A kind of gold rush seems to have broken out in the Carpathian Basin. Since 2012, in Slovakia alone, permits have been granted to companies, typically representing foreign (Australian, Canadian, Cypriot, Russian and British) financial interests, for exploration with a view to gold mining in some 27 places including Kremnica, Detva, Banská Stiavnica, Presov and Píla.

There is cause for concern that, as the ore in parts of the Carpathian Basin contains only small quantities of gold, cyanidation technology is very likely to be used in the mining process, disregarding the possibly more environmentally friendly alternatives. In view of this technology's harmful effects on human health and the environment, the residents affected have protested on a number of occasions against the planned projects. It should be highlighted in particular that Kremnica was recently awarded the title of EU capital of biodiversity, and that its environment – including the waters of the rivers Hron and Danube – would be severely jeopardised by the introduction of gold mining with cyanidation.

It should also not be forgotten that in 2010 the European Parliament adopted a resolution on a ban on the use of cyanide mining technologies, reflecting a political will which the Commission has since then failed to implement.

In the light of the above resolution, and given that more environmentally friendly gold-mining technologies could be used, when does the Commission propose to take the initiative on banning the use of cyanidation in mining?

Knowing the views and concerns of the affected residents, will the Commission carefully monitor the start-up of mining projects in the Carpathian Basin, with particular regard to ensuring immediate compliance with the relevant EU environmental standards?