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Business Ethics in Third World Countries[1]. A Romanian Representative Case: Roşia Montană

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Abstract

Roşia Montană case became representative by its complexity, considering the interaction of the economic with other social sectors on one hand, and on the other hand, considering the context of a economy on the globalization edge in a South-eastern European country 'rebuilt' after 1989 and in a permanent 'reform' of 20 years, representative by the way the economics dictates to the politics, sealing the road to sustainable disaster in an "era of sustainable development". Edifying symbol of the times that we live at the beginning of the XXIst century, maintaing the focus on the Romanian opened wound Roşia Montană is equivalent to a live lesson about the survival or the collapse of the (human) ecosystem. About the morality as a reality of another order than that of biological life and as a sine qua non condition of the humanity preservation.

Keywords: globalization, multinational companies, business ethics, sustainability, Roşia Montană

1. Argument

"For two hundred years, the economics sciences are attempting to separate themselves from the ethical considerations" (Hurduzeu and Médaille, 9). All intellectual models of the economy (laissez-faire, capitalism, socialism, Keynesianism, communism, globalizing), bringing the promise of a panacea, have practically shown the systemic disabilities resulted out of the fact that neither the socialist economic theories, nor the neoclassical ones do not entirely describe the real economy – this omission always allowing a certain group to make use of it in their own benefit: in the socialist countries, this group was made up of managers-political party members and by the state who claimed to be acting on behalf of the working class, but who actually acted for themselves; in the capitalist state, the group consists of managers of large corporate groups, which state that they are operating on behalf of the free market, but in fact do everything for their own benefit. The economical doctrines culminated in reiterating in a new form the globalizing trend, today a "cross-subsidies system" generating "fierce struggles for local resources, continually decreasing, in unsubsidized areas" (Hurduzeu and Médaille, 9, 65-70).

Due to the importance we confer to business ethics, as a pillar supporting the sustainability irrespective of the field and the level of the social life, this article aims to take a (controversial) Romanian case, stronlgy exposed nationally and internationally during the last 15 years - Roşia

[1] The aggregate term *Third World* was challenged as misleading starting with the Cold War period, because it got various meanings depending on different points of view: 1. it was used to define during the Cold War the countries that remained non-aligned or not moving at all with either capitalism and NATO (which along with its allies represented the First World) or communism and the Soviet Union (which along with its allies represented the Second World); 2. it has also a completely different definition according to human development index – the term Third World, when used today generally denotes countries that have not "developed" to the same levels as OECD countries, and which are thus in the process of "developing"; 3. in the 1980s, economist Peter Bauer offered a competing definition for the term Third World, claiming that the attachment of Third World status to a particular country was not based on any stable economic or political criteria, and was a mostly arbitrary process. The large diversity of countries that were considered to be part of the Third World, from Indonesia to Afghanistan, ranged widely from economically primitive to economically advanced and from politically non-aligned to Soviet- or Western-leaning. The only characteristic that Bauer found common in all Third World countries was that their governments "demand and receive Western aid" (the giving of which he strongly opposed). So I must mention that in this paper I use the term *Third World* with its generally second and third meaning from the above definition.

Montană - and pass it through the business ethics' filter in order to plead once more that good business means moral business.

This case became representative by its complexity considering the interaction of the economic with other social sectors on one hand, and on the other hand, considering the context of an economy on the globalization edge, in a 'restored' country, subjected to a permanent 'reform' of 20 years, representative by the way the economics decisions sustained by a political framework seal the road to *sustainable disaster* while the chorus of specialists and experts glorifies and abounds in theoretics / pleadings on the *sustainable development* theme but, practically, the political class are the embodiment of the motto "after us, the flood", the catastrophe remaining in the local inhabitants courtyard and on the backside of the next generations.

2. Approach to Business Ethics in Foreign Countries. Business' Impacts on Environment – Theoretical Frame for Roşia Montană Case (J.Fieser[2])

There is no approach to business ethics free from conceptual problems. Ethics is a complex subject and its history is filled with diverse theories that are systematically refuted by rival theories. So, we should expect to find controversies when applying ethics to the specific practices of business. However, following any of these three main approaches to business ethics – *1. Deriving business ethics from the profit motive; 2. Business ethics restricted to following the law; 3. Deriving business ethics from general moral obligations* – will bring us closer to acceptable moral behavior than we might otherwise be. Close attention to one's profit motive and the moral interests of consumers might in fact generate some morally responsible business decisions. We can indeed find additional moral guidance by looking at the laws that apply specifically to businesses. In gray areas of moral controversy that are not adequately addressed profit motives and the law, we can turn for guidance to a variety of general and specific moral principles.

Being moral may save a company from some legal and public relations nightmares, but morality in business is also costly. A morally responsible company must pay special attention to product safety, environmental impact, truthful advertising, scrupulous marketing, and humane working conditions. This may be more than a tight-budgeted business bargained for.

2.1 Doing Business in Foreign Countries shows us that in third world host countries the moral expectations are often more lax, and multinationals are tempted to lower their standards when situations permit. Areas of moral concern for multinationals:

2.1.1 ***Bribery in Third World Countries.*** It happens with greater frequency and there is a feeling that it is normal practice to bribe[3] government officials. Although few business people publicly defend bribing officials in third world countries, there is a common attitude within multination organizations that condones bribery on grounds like strictly financial considerations or practical considerations owing to what appears to be the universal nature of bribery in third world countries (often foreign government officials are so corrupt that it is virtually impossible to do business without playing by the unspoken rules).

2.1.2 ***Endorsing, Influencing, and Opposing Foreign Governments.*** Big businesses have an intimate relation with governments. Businesses lobby for fewer regulations, lighter taxes, governmental subsidies, and access to natural resources. Businesses also depend on government offices, such as law enforcement agencies, court systems, permit offices, and transportation

[2] this section of the paper synthesizes J.Fieser's *Business Ethics Course* found on http://www.utm.edu/staff/jfieser/vita/research/Busbook.htm, drawing out and in most cases quoting representativeness ideas, theories, examples for the main theme of the paper

[3] defining **bribery** as condition in which a person, such as a government official, agrees to be paid to act as dictated by an interested party, rather than doing what is required of him in his official employment. What is central to the notion of a bribe is that an agreement is made, even if the act itself is never performed and the payment is never made. It is also central that the person being bribed implicitly agreed to abide by the rules of his government, organization, or legal system. Bribery is different from **extortion,** which is where an official *requires* payment to perform his otherwise normal duties.

networks. The situation is made worse when multinationals coerce foreign governments especially in Third World countries.

2.1.3 ***Exploiting Third World Countries.*** Critics frequently accuse multinational corporations of exploiting the resources and workers of third world countries. Agricultural businesses often take the best land and use it for export crops, which diminish the amount of good land that the locals can use for their own food needs. Drug companies and hazardous chemical industries take advantage of more lax safety regulations, which often results in disaster. Mining industries exploit the wealth of the country for only a few rich landowners. Since many of these natural resources are in finite supply, developing countries have little hope of relying on them for future security once they are used up. Banks and financial institutions do not hire the local people, yet these businesses benefit by bringing in local money. Manufacturing and service industries introduce poverty to many areas by attracting more people to a factory than they can employ. They typically pay much less to third world employees than to their own (from their country), which suggest a double standard of labor value. If they pay wages to third world employees that are higher than what indigenous businesses can pay, then they attract the best workers, which hurt employers in surrounding businesses. Also, all of the above types of businesses destroy the local culture by introducing a foreign climate.

Cultural Relativism and Universal Moral Principles. Multinationals face the problem of relativism directly by placing one foot in the moral context of the origin country culture, and another foot in the moral context of a foreign culture. Driven by the profit motive, multinationals will be tempted to adopt the least costly moral principles that a given cultural context will allow.

If we grant that there is some commonality to moral values around the world, then, to that extent, multinationals have moral responsibilities that cross cultural boundaries. Among philosophers who recommend universal moral standards that are appropriate to the activities of multinationals, philosopher Richard T. De George (apud Fieser) offers a more specific set of guidelines for the following: do no intentional direct harm to the host country/ produce more good than bad for the host country/ contribute to the host country's development/ respect the human rights of its employees/ pay one's fair share of taxes/ respect the local culture and work with it/ cooperate when local governments reform social institutions, such as land and tax reform.

De George believes that third world countries lack adequate background institutions, such as regulatory agencies, which makes it all the more necessary for businesses to adherence to moral standards. Without an external monitoring authority (news organizations, international human rights groups, environmental groups), though, businesses may set them aside for reasons of profit.

2.2 Business and the Environment. Some businesses argue that their environmental responsibility is confined to what the law requires and what will yield a profit. However, ethicists typically argue that businesses need to look beyond profit motive and legal regulations to find more persuasive reasons for environmental responsibility.

From the ***anthropocentric perspective***, businesses have an obligation not to damage the environment in ways that negatively impact on human life. From the ***animal rights perspective***, businesses have an obligation to avoid harming animals either directly or indirectly. They need to avoid harming animals both directly (such as they might do through animal testing, or inhumane food production techniques) and indirectly (such as they might do by destroying animal environments; damage to the environment harms animals more than it harms humans. From the ***egocentric perspective***, businesses have a direct obligation to protect the environment since it is wrong to harm members of the moral community, and the environment is a member of the moral community.

In many cases the anthropocentric, animal rights and egocentric interests overlap. For example, toxic waste, air and water pollution, excess carbon dioxide, and release of fluorocarbons equally affect humans, animals, and environmental collections. In many cases, though, the interests of the three do not overlap. For example, sometimes when businesses are found legally responsible for polluting a stream, several corrective options may be open to them. First, they may restore the

stream, which costs a lot of money, or they may pay off a community in compensation for living with the polluted stream, which might cost them less money. Although the anthropocentrism will be satisfied with paying off the community, this would not touch the concerns of the animal rights and exocentrism.

In view of these various theories of environmental obligation, what should businesses do? First, businesses will automatically be bound by the environmental regulations that are required by law. Although this covers much ground, it doesn't cover everything. Second, businesses should at least be sensitive to environmental concerns from both the anthropocentric and animal rights perspectives. Animal rights and environmental lobby groups today are becoming increasingly more influential, and, as a matter of good public relations and even survival, companies need to take this into account. Many environmental problems lend themselves to graphic portrayal by the media – such as sea animals covered in oil, which intensifies negative public opinion towards a company. If companies don't respond properly, they appear to be arrogant and uncaring, and this could greatly harms their reputation.

3. Synthetic Presentation of the Roşia Montană Case

Romania is known for the gold deposits and the exploitation of the gold polygon in the Metaliferi Mountains (in the Western Carpathians) has been attested since pre-Roman age. Occupying an area of 2500 km ² (bounded by the localities Baia de Arieş, Zlanta, Săcărâmb, Caracal), the gold deposit area is one of the most richly mineralized magma areas in the world, about 2,000 tons of gold being exploited over an area of approximately 900 km². Therefore the mineralization is predominantly formed of gold, the other associated elements as metal sulfides, sulfide salts and gangue minerals, being subordinated to the gold.

Founded within this geographical context, Roşia Montană area (an area of 66 925 ha and a stable population of over 34 000 inhabitants - representing 8% of Alba County) includes one of the oldest towns in the country, now known worldwide as gold deposit and the archaeological remains discovered in the region. Throughout history, though literally living over a huge richness, the locals generally lived in deprivation and poverty – remember a saying from the locals' folklore: Our Mountains are carrying gold / while we beg on the edge of the road - , lots of the gold from the Metaliferi Mountains, successively heading to Rome, Budapest, Vienna, Moscow.

Factors that contribute to the economic potential in the area:

- natural resources of the subsoil (Au and Ag) and soil (forests, pastures, meadows) that allowed industrial-agricultural operation, the largest part of the function consisting in industrial-mining and natural scenery (gorges, caves, karst phenomena etc.) is a resource for development of tourist activity;
- employment with tradition in some industries (mining, wood and metals, livestock, crafts);
- present inputs and outdated technology and lack of planning with fitting means of communication, water, electricity and heat supply, etc. (Bran, 13-14)

Private and state mining in Roşia Montană has been maintained until the tragic nationalization of the key production means, by the communist regime on June 11, 1948; one single state-owned unit is organized – *Roşia Montană Mining Company*, which has been operating, under different denominations, until June 1, 2006.

After 1990, the gold mining is no longer supported by the state and the degradation of the technological flow begins, investments are no longer running, the production of ore and gold is dramatically reduced and in 2006 the personnel was reduced 3 times compared with year 1990, reaching 380 employees. "The state is no longer interested in the gold production. Gold is a commodity. You go to the market and if you need it you buy, says the National Bank of Romania Governor." (Sîntimbreanu and collab., 46)

"The Mining's rescuer", arisen after 1995 under the form of foreign investors, is proving to be the Canadian company Gabriel Resources Ltd. Mining which enters into/creates the *new joint company Roşia Montană Gold Corporation SA* (RMGC), where Gabriel Resources is the holding

company, co-sharing the capital with the Romanian State company Minvest. S.A., in a share rate of: 80% / 19.3% and a remaining percentage of 0.7%, held by other Romanian shareholders. Romanian State leased out the rights for exploitation of the mining area to the new company whose project intended to obtain 300 tons of gold and 1600 tons of silver / year working more than 16 years and, as consecutively measure of the first directive, to remove almost 2,000 locals. This company has gain possession of detailed documentation of the deposit at a pitiful price, it has sought after certain deposits of sterile as part of the ore reserves research and finally estimated "218 million tons of ore with average content of 1.62 g/t Au and 7.47 g/t Ag, equivalent to 330.5 t gold and 1628.4 t silver. Operation's length: 16,2 years. The operation will be done in 4 career area: Cetate, Cârnic, Orlea, Jig-Văidoaia. Ore will be processed by cyanide technology with a consumption of 0.8 kilograms of cyanide per ton of ore. The investment will provide 1,200 jobs during the construction phase and 550 jobs during the operational phase. The project will occupy an area of 2,000 hectares. The program of removal and relocation of population affects 2,064 properties, about 2,000 people, 9 churches, cemeteries, schools, kindergartens, social and administrative buildings, etc. On Corna Valley will be built a pond with area of 600 ha, as storage after the extraction of gold (dump), which will be based on a dam with a height of 180 m. Roşia Montană and Corna will be wiped out from the earth's surface. In the middle of Western Mountains a desert area will appear, full of cyanide." (Ibid.)

Currently, a part of the population left, abandoning their roots, their traditions, due to the pressure and /or tempting financial offers to leave the villages. Many bought houses were demolished.

Synthetically, mineral resources, geographical location, woods, bodies of water, local patrimony entitle Roşia Montană as "national and universal treasure as part of geological, mining, mineralogy, history and culture, with the largest deposits in the country and in Europe" (ibid.), a treasure which could/would become a memory in case of applying this huge mining project.

4. Mining project Vs. Business Ethics

Roşia Montană mining project contains many unresolved questions and contradictory elements.

4.1 Relationship between Company and Employees

This theme covers topics such as: the loyalty of the employees, the company's responsibility to the employer and firm conduct to employees.

The difficulties arise from the project mining company's responsibility towards the employees in several respects, starting with discrimination. The initial jobs' offer was enthusiastically estimated at thousands of jobs, but soon it became insignificant, as cyanide technology requires a small number of employees it is possible that the employment of labor would not exceed 300 employees. "Like any project in which the foreigner part has the biggest capital, it will bring the necessary workforce for those jobs which are well paid. If, due to low content of gold and silver ore, the question will decrease costs, reducing the number of employees' alternative will be taken into account first, leading to a decrease of the employment in the long term. Destruction of agricultural land and forests that provide a source of income for local people will generate more poverty. [...] Major differences in standards of living among the majority of the unemployed and the few employees of mining company will create more social tension." (Bran, 17-18)

4.2 Relationship Company – Community

The topic of business-community relations is related to company's responsibility to the community, pollution, environmental degradation, depletion of non-renewable resources. According to the moral principle 'do not harm' and to the principle of assuming accountability for the guilt, companies should take responsibility for negative externalities, eliminating them as much as possible and compensate those who involuntarily pay those costs. In reality, this rarely happens because: the lack of adequate legislation facilitates diminishes or nullifies company's

accountability; the cost for others stakeholders is hard to prove (in the courts or to the public) or the costs are difficult to measure, to evaluate, to separate from other costs (which are not attributable to the firm), the firm that makes use of its work's positive externalities (benefits to third parties – for example, in the mining project, 'blessings' in the form of job offers, financial offers for removal).

Regarding the negative externalities, the mining project has a devastating impact on the environment:

• Cyanide mining is one of the dirtiest industries in the world. Among the long-term effects there are included: pollution of watercourses and ground water, destroying the aquatic life of rivers and poisoning the birds. Long-term chronic poisoning affects fish reproduction and development, and for a human being a teaspoon of 2% cyanide solution is fatal.

Moreover, accidents and cyanide spills occur each year all over the world. In Romania at 7 years after the tragic event in Baia Mare, at the European and international level there were not still any regulations to prevent the occurrence of similar disasters. Romania, however, as host country of the accident, now has the opportunity to take and transpose into action (legal framework and its enforcement) the moral duty towards their citizens and to neighboring states to end mining in this dangerous technology (http://www.faracianura.ro), despite assurances made by R. Young, Chief Financial Officer of Gabriel Resources in Roşia project, that will meet "the highest industry standards and pollution problem will be solved according to EU standards".

• "Roşia Montană Urbanistical Plan includes some areas protected from exploitation in career. This includes top of the village, the old center to Tăul Tarina, Tăul cel Mare, Brazi, Anghel, archaeological site Carpeni, Piatra Corbului and Tăul Găuri. These protected areas exist between the limits of the careers or at their periphery. Only some simpletons can imagine that in the perimeter area, where dozens of tons of explosives will be detonated at short intervals, anything will survive." (Sîntimbrean, 47)

Related to removal, the locals say that RMGC has put pressure on them in the past, in order to determine them to abandon the community (Tudorache): "They corrupted/ bought the local doctor and they made him leave. They also corrupted the local priest by offering a job to his wife. We spent about eight months without a doctor and priest and we were forced by these circumstances to bury our dead in another location than the local cemetery, we went far to Abrud", says a local. Other claim that the lack of pupils from school (lack as the consequence of the removal) were about to force them to send their children to distances of tens of kilometers to ensure their education because the local school, without enough pupils, was about to be closed.

"The mining company has broken our ford and destroyed our business", state two shop owners in the area, claiming that the amount of compensation is not enough to buy new offices and housing.

Gabriel Resources acknowledges that it paid off the phone bills of the mayor, but only because he "was not found by phone when the mining company most needed it."

Moreover, 9-10 old men from an isolated neighboring village received mobiles from Gabriel Resources and they also received persons who took care of them from time to time. "We have about 15 people involved in social projects", said Gabriel's officials.

4.3 Relationship State - Company - Community

The conduct of public resources by companies and groups of entrepreneurs is questionable, as long as people and disadvantaged groups are facing shortages. The moral principle of taking in account the priority suggests the need to help first those in shortage; on the other hand, entrepreneurs often argue that it is economically more economic (and, in terms of utilitarianism, more effective at national level) to help businesses and entrepreneurs.

"Roşia Montană has been declared 'disadvantageous area', so any company that invests here is exempted from taxes on profits and if the company is a large investor, it is exempted from customs duties too. Throughout the operation (mining project) the state budget will receive a total

of approx. 160 mil.USD representing direct benefits accrued from the fee of 2% and Minvest' profits." (Bran, 17)

The Roşia Montană mining rights concession's to foreign investors represents a decision to liquidate, not to support the local community currently in shortage; on the other hand, looking from the state's benefits point of view (meaning by 'state' more than the political class), it is impossible to admit that there are benefits in terms of slaughter environment and national heritage: "The Romanian state shows a huge indifference concerning the population, the natural wealth, the cultural and historical relics, millennia of our existence on this earth." (Sîntimbrean, 46)

The action manner of Romanian state's representatives has generated many questions and doubts about supporting the project approvals (from local to central level) and the accuracy review of mining project being completed. Concession was made while the project is not approved by most local people, by prestigious scientists and intellectuals of the Romanian Academy, Academy of Economic Studies, etc., The Church and other organizations and institutions in the country and abroad.

What remains out of the ***accountability of the company towards the local community*** *if the results don't confirm the forecast and the foreign investor (in association with Romanian State) stops the work before the formal period of operation, what will happen to the destroyed area?*

The Mining company has already spent 150 million U.S. dollars, of which only 20 million to displace 420 families in the area (and those who left bought properties hundreds of miles away, fearing the future pollution). The subsequent project costs 500-600 million U.S. dollars, of which 70% will be raised by international syndicated bank loan. Gabriel Resources does not have an international credit rating, which it may raise borrowing costs because of a high risk investment. Further, the Roşia Montană deposit whose gold content is below 2 g/ tone and, according to geologists, does not deserve to be exploited, because the mine will be sensitive to market fluctuations, with serious risk of temporary or permanent closure of the mine, due to a decrease in the gold price. "The production, processing 13 million tons of ore per year (400 000 t / year at present) is not feasible in Romania, at least not in a populated area like Roşia Montană is. A simple calculation shows that even if RMGC works every day of the year, 8 hours a day, will not load, transport, unload 30 heavy trucks (150 t) / h, traffic is virtually impossible to control." (Bran, 15)

"The project has stagnated, as if expecting to convince the locals to do what Austrian armies, on the battlefield, couldn't convinced them hundred years ago: to give up. To leave." (Tudorache)

5. Reactions in the Media and among Civil Society

Sites of major NGOs from the 'Resistance Movement' (with extensive documentation on the mining project and its fateful consequences on Roşia Montană, with news on the degree of the various lawsuits against the mining project and questionnaires expecting the public to vote for or against the project) show the opposite side comparing to advertising spots shown on the most popular TV stations in the country. RMGC spent "fabulous sums to support the project on radio, television and the press while the population is living a tragedy beyond description" (Sîntimbrean, 47). What RMGC campaign does not say, but tacitly RMGC leadership acknowledges, is that: excepting the local workers who will remain at the mine during the project, the whole Romanian community in Roşia Montană has to disappear.

Alburnus Maior Association was founded as an NGO (representing the interests of the farming families from Roşia Montană area, families decided to remain on the traditional land) in September 2000 by the inhabitants and owners of the Roşia Montană and it is the initiator of *Save Roşia Montană* campaign, the largest civil society initiative in Romania against the mining project proposed by RMCG, an actively assisted motion of about 40 NGOs in Romania, Romanian Academy, universities, churches and public figures. *Save Rosia Montana* campaign represents the opposition to the opening of the largest surface mine in Europe, on consideration of environmental

and cultural reasons, taking also into account the economic prospects on long term and disastrous social impact through relocation and resettlement of local people.

However, the start of the mining project depends on the complete environmental impact study (an expensive study due to the environmental standards imposed by the World Bank, as well as the draft for financial compensation of the displaced) which the company has submitted to the Government (to the central environmental authority), 2006 . Even if the agreement is approved by the Government, the project will not start without the owners' expropriation.

Alburnus Maior and the Independent Center for Development of Environmental Resources promoted a Court action against the environmental impact assessment (EIA) proposed by RMGC' experts and on November 11, 2009 the organization announced that a final decision of Cluj Court annulled the urban planning certificate Nr. 105 / 27.07.2007 issued by the Alba County Council to RMGC to continue the procedure for EIA for mining project; this certificate is suspended by law until the irrevocable settlement of the dispute. (http://rosiamontana.org)

6. Alternatives for Sustainable Development at Rosia Montana

The mining project is opposed to the sustainability concept. In case of future quarries according to the mining project, Rosia Montana will disappear: it may wound up "in several years the work of successive peoples who worked there. [...] In addition we will lose all the gold from our country, as we have lost uranium that Soviets have taken." (Berindei D. 2002, apud Sîntimbrean, p.47)

How can this marvelous potential of the area be exploited without using up the short depletion whose cost is the liquidation of localities Roşia Montană and Corna, with all that a community implies?

Alburnus Maior aims to support sustainable development initiatives in the area and conservation of natural and historical heritage. In this regard it has been initiated two projects to promote tourism: *Roşia Montana – The Gold Way* (www.drumulaurului.ro) and *Bucium – Daffodil's County* (www.buciumanii.ro).

Bran precisely and comprehensively proposes, in the homonymous paper, *alternatives concerning the economical, financial, environmental, and sustainability problems in Apuseni Mountains, especially regarding Roşia Montana Area,* from the ecological-economical point of view.

6.1. Development of economic activities taking place in the area or which could be developed taking into account the resources of this area:

• "bakery resource development from the existing bakery in the area;
• establishment of a central collection and primary processing of milk;
• establishment of furriers workshops, painting and processing of hides and skins;
• establishment of units for preparation of meat, an oil press, a workshop for washing, spinning and weaving wool;
• resumption of production of woven wool rugs and other indoor work;
• setting up processing units and marketing of wood (carpenters, coopers, furniture, etc.)
• development of artisanal production;
• development of the acquisition and exploitation of forest fruits and medicinal plants;
• creation of units of agricultural services providers (agricultural services and maintenance of mechanical means used in agriculture);
• developing the maintenance and repair of the cars (car service);
• establishment of power stations for motor fuels;
• establishment of passenger service and freight".

6.2 Suggestions for other actions in the spirit of sustainability:

• exploiting the human fascination with gold, Bran suggests money should not be made from gold mining, but from the support services around a (closed) mine by creating a center (touristic, commercial, cultural and historical) coupled with an archaeological park and a tourist area circuit including the 42 houses with heritage value (historical monuments), developing a national tourist route linking towns with Roman remains;

• establishment of horse breeders, bike rental companies - as sustainable transport for tourists on mountain roads, rehabilitation of the line Turda-Abrud for tourist purposes and freight;

• organizing training courses and seminars for local people who wish to receive the tourists, attracting funds through community development projects to bring the competitive standards of houses that will be accommodated for tourists and upgrading transport infrastructure and public utilities;

• the perspective of including Roşia Montană Area as UNESCO heritage area (Bran, 14, 19-20).

7. Conclusions

Roşia Montană, seen as a mono-industrial area by the proponents of the mine, is in fact a region with important archaeological vestiges, traditions and customs which are as much a part of the identity of the place as mining is. At the end of 2009 the mining project was temporally suspended, not ended, so area's future is still ambiguous.

Concerning how much the environment could carry the economy (there is no middle road here, and today's global economy, shaped by market forces and not by ecological principles, resulted in a distorted economy that is in discord with the world ecosystem - a *economy that destroys its own natural support systems*), previous experiences in mono-industrial development based on mining demonstrate how difficult and expensive is the rehabilitation of mining areas by introducing diversified and sustainable economic activities and how big is the risk of ecological imbalance. Ecological imbalances, with a complex causality, depending directly or indirectly by human activity, are a strong motivation for both economical and ecological concrete action.

The negative implications of the Roşia Montană mining project on the Romanians of today and tomorrow concern also the historical and cultural heritage: a people who destroy its historical records, deliberately devalues its own ID.

In terms of profitability, for the Romanian economy a mining project that exploits the golden resource causing huge and irreversible damage on the environment and the human community for 18% of the affair's benefit is an obvious loss, but if the Romanian government finally accepts it, it would be a statement that will surprises nobody in the context of costs-benefits ratios in the Romanian privatization over the past 20 years. Romania has devolved after 1989 lacking clear and articulated objectives in the country's development strategy; each government and political party has established economic, social, environmental objectives entered into a strategy, but in practice the action's horizon of these strategies has been for a year, even if, formally, the strategy was designed during an electoral mandate. We never had a strategy based on a development concept and practice that would give unity of thought, action, and strong motivation for people.

Considering the arguments presented in this paper, in the current Romanian context I embrace the point of view that considers that until Romania could afford to make truly profitable business, until the Government, the National Agency for Mineral Resources will establish clear policies and (public) criteria in approving licenses for mining activities and related projects for precious metals and other types of projects on the Romanian territory, until the development of technologies will allow clean and more safe mining operation and until the Romanian political corruption's level will decrease diminishing this enormous suspicions of corruption concerning most of these relevant national projects' approval - until then, I say, the Romanian gold would be better to remain in the ground, waiting for better times...

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