

THE MINING / METALLURGICAL INDUSTRY IN GREECE. STATISTICAL REVIEW 2007-2008

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SUMMARY

Greece is one of the EU countries that possess substantial mineral wealth, consisting of a variety of minerals and ores with a large industrial interest. The high quality and the many specialized uses of minerals available in Greece in comparison with other EU countries and internationally, provides significant comparative advantages to the economy of the country. The mining industry has a strong outward-looking character, since exports account for more than 65% of national sales, and holds leading positions in the global market. Today, mining companies are well organized and hold significant market shares in products such as bauxite, alumina, aluminum, nickel, caustic calcined magnesite, raw magnesite, pumice, silica and marble.

Greece is a major global supplier of several key industrial minerals, notably bentonite, magnesite, and perlite. The country's position as a leading producer of these minerals is well established. Greece is the only producing country of huntite, the leading global supplier of perlite, the second in the production of pumice and bentonite, and the first in the export of magnesium compounds within the EU. Greece is also the second largest producer in the EU, and the fifth largest worldwide, of lignite (brown coal), which is Greece's only significant fossil fuel resource used for the country's power generation. Moreover, Greece has significant deposits of clay, limestone, shale, gypsum, kaolin, mixed sulphide ores (lead, zinc), olivine, pozzolan, quartz etc. Finally, there are significant mineral deposits which have not yet been exploited, or where exploitation has temporarily ceased (such as manganese, chromite, uranium, gold, oil, emery, salt etc.), as well as major geothermal energy potential, suitable either for power generation or for various thermal applications.

The Greek mining/metallurgical industry constitutes an important sector of the economic activity of

our country (it constitutes 3-5% of the GDP, with the inclusion of interrelated enterprises such as quarrying, processing and production of intermediate and final products) and supplies essential raw materials for primary industries such as cement, production of energy, non-ferrous metals (aluminum, nickel, etc), the industry of stainless steel etc. The estimated sales of Greece concerning mineral industry and basic metallurgies, totals almost €2.5 billion, while approximately 20-23 thousand employees are employed in the sector (in mines, quarries, and the two basic extractive metallurgies of the country) and more than 90 thousand are employed in jobs dependent upon or associated with it. Moreover, the industry provides a major source of employment in the country, and because, as a rule, the processing of these raw materials takes place in the region in which they are excavated, the industry also contribute considerably to coveted regional growth.

Soon, after a period of possibly two years of recession, and despite significant losses, the raw materials field will come again to the forefront. However, the challenges for sustainable management, quality, safety and environmental protection constitute the most significant challenges and also the most pressing needs of this era – deeply influencing not only the development of the mining industry, but also its traditional character of many centuries and finally its very existence. My point is that we should address the challenges of the era by promoting policies and practices which combine social and economic growth with the environmental protection, and employ new materials, new technologies and new processes that are friendlier to the citizens and the environment.

Production data and best available estimates for various mineral commodities produced in Greece in the years 2007 and 2008 are listed in the following Table.

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GREECE: PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES
METALS, INDUSTRIAL MINERALS, MINERAL FUELS AND RELATED MATERIALS

COMMODITY ¹ PRODUCTION	Quantity in Metric tons unless otherwise specified	
	2007	2008
Bauxite	2,093,433	2,174,000
Alumina, calcined (Al ₂ O ₃)	761,746	771,769
Aluminium, primary (electrolysis)	167,937	162,339
Mixed sulphide ore	208,724	264,299
Galena PbS (metric tons of concentrates)	22,407	23,314
Ag content (Kg)	NA	NA
Zinc blend, ZnS (metric tons of concentrates)	39,729	46,532
Nickeliferous ores (laterites)	2,367,000	2,261,637
Ferronickel: Ni content of ferronickel	18,668	16,640
Magnesite, crude	399,475	455,069
Dead-burned magnesia	41,961	48,719
Caustic-calcined magnesia	71,032	70,545
Basic monolithic refractories	31,042	35,617
Asbestos fibres	0	0
Bentonite, crude	1,382,800	1,500,000
Attapulgit	7,000	25,000
Huntite, crude	16,370	19,600
Pozzolan, Santorin earth	1,520,000	1,059,000
Kaolin, crude	30,000	4,360
Perlite, crude	1,100,000	1,000,000
Perlite, treated	650,000	600,000
Pumice	838,000	828,000
Silica (SiO ₂)	125,000	64,521
Gypsum and anhydrite, crude	836,967	830,000
Baryte crude ore	0	0
Amphibolite	57,367	57,500
Feldspar	95,000	62,000
CO ₂ [liquid]	12,500	12,200
Talc and steatite, crude	200	NA
Lignite, in thousand metric tons	66,100	64,521
Crude oil, in barrels	575,413	477,679
Natural gas, in Nm ³	21,221,053	14,058,056
Salt, sea salt	212,000	220,000 ²
Sulphur, by-product of oil & gas	NA	NA
Mineral Aggregates (sand, gravel, crushed stones etc.), in thousand metric tons	90,000 ²	85,000 ²
Marble, in cubic meters	165,276	160,000

¹ In addition to the commodities listed, other crude construction materials are produced, but available information, is inadequate to make reliable estimates of output.

² Estimated, NA: not available

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