



Women in Europe for a Common Future | **WECF**

To the President of Republic Armenia  
His Excellency Serzh Sargsyan.

Date: 13 October 2008

**Re: International Drinking Water Reservoir Lake SEVAN threatened by Geopromining LTD activities**

Dear Excellency Serzh Sargsyan,

**The NGO Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF), a network of more than 100 organisations in the EU and EECCA region, together with its Armenian partners Ecolur and AWHHE, are writing to express our concerns about a major threat to Lake Sevan.**

Lake Sevan is a strategic stock of fresh water for Armenia and the whole Caucasus region, situated at 2000 m above sea level, with a volume of about 33 billion cubic meters.

The basin of Sevan Lake is also a unique ecosystem of a dozens of plants and animals that are included in the Red Data Book. Sevan is rich in food fish and crawfish. Sevan is the only recreational zone in Armenia.

The Armenian gold-mining company "AGRC" was purchased in 2007, by the Geopromining LTD. The company has an intention to move the enterprise from Ararat town (167 km from Sevan) to Sotk mine (20 km from Sevan) to be near to the mine, despite the fact that **ore mining and processing activities are prohibited by the Law within the bounds of 50 km of lake Sevan.**

If the company moves to lake Sevan, this strategic fresh water stock, will be severely threatened from pollution of the ore waste, which is to be stored in the tailing dump at Sotk mine on the basin of Sevan. The tailing dump is likely to produce infiltration of toxic substances into the soil and groundwaters. It is planned that 10 million tons of ore waste will be dumped, containing hazardous substances such as cyanides, arsenic, antimony and pyrite. Many of them remain dangerous for millions of years. Oxide of pyrite, under the influence of atmospheric precipitation, generates sulphuric acid, which is highly corrosive and very likely to lead to a corrosion of the surrounding rocks and an even wider dissemination of the hazardous substances in the soil and groundwaters.

In addition, Lake Sevan is classified as a seismic active zone, where an earthquake of more than 6 on the scale of Richter can be expected, which, if the tailing dump is damaged, would lead to a catastrophe.

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We, undersigned organisations, are very concerned about the possible ecological and human catastrophe in case the ecosystem of Lake Sevan is destroyed including the main components: fresh water, biodiversity and soil.

**Therefore, we call to:**

- Consider alternatives for the construction of the enterprise outside of the 50km zone of Sevan,
- Insist that an environmental impact and health risk assessment is carried out by independent experts,
- Present the results of the environmental impact and health risk assessment to the public,
- Guarantee public participation in the decision making on the Geopromining Lake Sevan plans,
- Provide transparency on the entire process, including financial transactions between Geopromining and involved parties from the Armenian side.

For further information, please contact:

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Members of European Parliament  
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