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Before 1989, when the Communism regime fell, mineral resources in Romania were exploited by state-owned companies. Although these exploitations were advertised as big economic successes of the communist governments, in reality, most of them were using outdated technology and some caused significant pollution in the mining perimeters. Moreover, in the context of Romania's negotiations to join the European Union, some of the mining exploitations had to be shut down as they were far from being compliant with the European environmental standards.

Romanian governments became aware that some of the mining exploitations could not be further operated without capital injections necessary for financing the acquisition of new technology and environmental investments. Lately, the Romanian government has decided to revitalise several mining projects in its effort to boost the Romanian industry and create workplaces.

In Romania, mining activity is mainly regulated by the Mining Law (Law No. 85/2003), which regulates the regime of mining licences, as well as royalties, mining fees and reporting obligations. The mining licences are concessions of mining operations. They do not grant the licensee surface rights and they do not stand for building or operating permits.

Acquisition of surface rights, urban planning or environmental impact assessments is regulated under separate laws.

Mining licences are granted by the National Authority for Mineral Resources (NAMR), which is a public authority directly subordinate to the Romanian government. They are signed by the NAMR and the mining operator in the form of concession agreements detailing the parties' rights and obligations.

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