

Travel Report

Research-Travel Grant provided by the Center for European Studies

August-September 2008

Vlad Cristian Ionescu Isac Gotia

M.A. Student, Carleton University - Ottawa

I wish to thank to the Centre for European Studies for offering me a travel grant to conduct my research for my MA thesis, *The Jiu Valley Miners: The End of Political Violence*. The research trip took place in Romania, more specifically, in Bucharest, the Jiu Valley, and the cities of Deva and Timisoara. The research focused on primary data that would help me answer my research question: why have the miner riots of the 1990s Romania stop? It must be said that the Jiu Valley miners were violently involved in the Romanian political life of the 1990s. However, no such involvement occurred after 1999. Before conducting the research trip, my hypothesis underlined the role of the EU in the social and economical development of the Jiu Valley, and thus in preventing any future miner riots. My project was based on a few academic articles and literally no books since not much has been written on the subject, being still a sensitive issue for the Romanian public and politicians. Moreover, the few Romanian sources on the subject were not accessible from Canada.

For this reason, in the absence of academic work, traveling to those states, conducting interviews with local county administrators, mayors and project managers, and acquiring the academic work on the subject published in Romania was the only possible way to get a full and in depth grasp of the phenomenon. Furthermore, while travelling to the Hunedoara County - where the Jiu Valley is located - and the Jiu Valley itself, I managed to have important conversations with various political leaders in the region and academics. After a couple of interviews and a discussion with the Dean of Arts Faculty of the University of Petrosani, I realized that I need to change my hypothesis as the role of the EU had not been central in the development of the Valley. Conversations with other academics and experts on the social development of the Jiu Valley have enriched my knowledge on the subject and offered me a full picture of the entire socio-economic development of the region. Thus, my new hypothesis rests on a number of factors: the miner riots stopped because of the change in the miners' leadership, the active involvement of the central government in the socio-economic development of the region, and the miners' perceived legitimacy of the central government. Hence, the CES grant has been central in making my trip possible and in helping me conduct my research.

I would like to take the opportunity, therefore, to express my gratitude for the help and support of the Centre for European Studies, Dr. Joan DeBardeleben, Director of CES and Natalia Joukovskaia, CES Project Coordinator.