

Toxic mining disasters 'loom in eastern Europe'

October 3 2011



A red sludge storage facility is seen near Kolontar, 160 km west of Budapest, Hungary -- the site of a deadly red mud toxic spill in 2010. Toxic mining disasters loom in eastern Europe as the European Union has failed to pass legislation a year after Hungary's lethal toxic mud spill, an environmentalist group said.

Toxic mining disasters loom in eastern Europe as the European Union has failed to pass legislation a year after Hungary's lethal toxic mud spill, an environmentalist group said on Monday.

"Hungary has let its presidency of the EU pass without taking any action to defuse further ticking time bombs in Central and Eastern Europe," said Gabor Figeczky, the head of WWF in Hungary, which chaired the 27-member union in the first half of 2011.

Prior to the first anniversary of Hungary's biggest ever environmental disaster the organisation demanded that Brussels draw up an action plan to ensure the EU's existing rules on mining waste were applied.

"The EU directive which was introduced in 2006 is in principle good, but must now be effectively implemented," said Figeckzy.

In September, Hungarian authorities slapped a massive fine of 135 billion forints (470 million euros) on the alumina plant MAL Zrt responsible for the [spill](#) which killed 10 people and sent 1.1 million cubic metres (38.8 million cubic feet) of toxic red mud cascading into surrounding villages.

WWF said that sum should be used not only for compensation but also "to identify other time bombs still ticking in Hungary".

It warned that potentially dangerous [toxic waste](#) dumps existed all over the former communist bloc.

Last week, environmental pressure group [Greenpeace](#) staged a protest against the storage of [dangerous substances](#) at another [red mud](#) reservoir in Hungary, demanding its immediate closure.

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Citation: Toxic mining disasters 'loom in eastern Europe' (2011, October 3) retrieved 11 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-10-toxic-disasters-loom-eastern-europe.html>

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