2010 Minerals Yearbook

MOLDOVA [ADVANCE RELEASE]

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The Mineral Industry of Moldova

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Moldova had a small mineral industry that was primarily engaged in the mining and production of industrial minerals and mineral products, including cement, clays, gypsum, limestone, and sand and gravel. The country was dependent on imports for all its coal, natural gas, and oil supplies, which came mainly from Russia (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, 2012). Moldova's main mineral resources were industrial minerals used to produce construction materials and as input for the cement, chemical, food processing, and glass industries. Small deposits of iron ore, natural gas, and oil had been explored but were not found to be economic to develop (U.S. Department of State, 2011).

Production

In 2010, Moldova's gross domestic product (GDP) in current prices was 71.8 billion lei (or $5.81 billion[1]). This constituted an increase of 6.9% compared with that of 2009. Industrial production accounted for 13.3% of the total GDP. Compared with that of 2009, total industrial production in 2010 increased by 7.0%, mining and quarrying increased by 5.6%, and production by the metallurgical industry increased by 19.5% (National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova, 2011a, b). Data on mineral production are in table 1.

Structure of the Mineral Industry

Table 2 lists all major mineral industry facilities.

Commodity Review

Metals

Iron and Steel.—In 2010, OAO Moldovan Metallurgical Plant, which is located in the Transnistria region, continued to struggle amidst the economic crisis. Production of crude steel decreased by 43.3% compared with that of 2009 to a new low of 241,000 metric tons (t), and stayed very much below the plant's capacity level of about 1.1 million metric tons (Mt). The production of rolled steel decreased by 47.5% from the 2009 level to 231,400 t (MetalDaily.ru, 2011; OJSC Moldova Steel Works, 2012).

Industrial Minerals

Cement.—Despite the global economic crisis, cement production in 2010 increased by 28.6% and reached an estimated figure of 900,000 t. The two major cement producers in Moldova were Lafarge Ciment Moldova SA, which was located in the northern part of Moldova, and Rybnitsa Cement Complex, which was located in the Transnistria region. Nevertheless, cement producers continued to struggle. The Rybnitsa Cement Complex reportedly produced only 330,000 t and was working at about 30% of its capacity. A significant share of cement produced in Moldova was exported to Russia, other countries of the former Soviet Union, and the European Union (Kol'tsova, 2011).

Outlook

In the course of the next 2 to 3 years, the industry of Moldova, including the mineral industry, is likely to return to prerecession production levels. In the long run, however, the country is likely to remain a small producer of a very limited set of mineral commodities, predominantly industrial minerals. A significant problem Moldova could face in the future is related to its lack of hydrocarbons, which makes the country dependent on its neighbors for energy. Two possible solutions might be either an increase of domestic exploration activities or investment in renewable energy sources, both of which are costly and have highly uncertain returns. To get rid of its reputation as one of the poorest countries in Europe and to bring back thousands of its citizens now working abroad, Moldova would have to succeed in providing a reliable energy base for its economy (Ratha and others, 2007).

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[1]Where necessary, values have been converted from Moldovan leu (MDL) to U.S. dollars (US$) at the exchange rate of MDL12.36=US$1.00.

TABLE 1

MOLDOVA: PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES[1]

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity		2006	2007	2008[e]	2009[e]	2010[e]
METALS						
Steel, crude		675,400	995,000	885,000	425,900 [r, 2]	241,500 [2]
INDUSTRIAL MINERALS						
Cement		837,000	800,000 [e]	750,000	700,000	900,000
Clays, unspecified		227,968	165,040	165,000	150,000	160,000
Gypsum		186,200	311,900	701,200 [r, 2]	164,200 [r, 2]	300,000
Lime		2,153	1,135	1,000	800	900
Limestone		15,333	166,870	165,000	150,000	170,000
Sand and gravel		289,042	272,197	200,000	150,000	195,000
MINERAL FUELS AND RELATED MATERIALS						
Natural gas, dry	million cubic meters	56	--	-- [r]	-- [r]	--
Peat, fuel use[e]		475,000	475,000	475,000	475,000	475,000

[e]Estimated; estimated data are rounded to no more than three significant digits. [r]Revised. -- Zero.

[1]Table includes data available through March 15, 2012.

[2]Reported figure.

TABLE 2

MOLDOVA: STRUCTURE OF THE MINERAL INDUSTRY IN 2010

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity		Major operating companies and major equity owners	Location of main facilities	Annual capacity[e]
Cement		Lafarge Ciment Moldova SA	Rezina	1,100,000
Granite	thousand cubic meters	NA	Kosoutskoye deposit	150
Gypsum		CMC-Knauf joint venture	Kirovskoye deposit	850,000
Oil and natural gas:				
Oil		Redeco Moldova Oil and Gas Co.	Valeni oilfield	100,000
Natural gas	thousand cubic meters	do.	Victorovca gasfield	5,000
Sand and gravel	do.	NA	71 mined deposits	1,000
Steel, crude		OAO Moldovan Metallurgical Plant	Ribnita, Transnistria region	1,100,000

[e]Estimated; estimated data are rounded to no more than three significant digits. do. Ditto. NA Not available.