

THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF MOLDOVA

By Richard M. Levine

Moldova has a small mineral industry, the output of which, according to Soviet statistics, accounted for less than 1% of the value of Moldova's industrial output in the mid-1980's.

The mineral industry was primarily engaged in the mining and production of industrial minerals, including cement, dimension stone, gypsum, limestone, and sand and gravel. There were more than 100 deposits in Moldova being exploited for industrial minerals. Moldova also has a steel minimill in Rybnitsa. Moldova had been receiving more than 90% of its industrial raw materials and more than 98% of its fuels from other regions of the FSU.

In 1995, the Moldovan economy appeared to experience some revival as the GDP increased by an estimated 2% compared with 1994 after having decreased by 31% in 1994. Industrial output in 1995 compared with 1994 fell by 6% which was about the same rate of decline as in 1994. In 1995, production of construction materials fell by 17% compared with 1994 because of a slowdown in construction. There was a decrease in output for certain items such as bricks, expanded clay aggregates, glassware, reinforced concrete blocks, and wall tile ceramics. According to the Moldovan Department of Statistics, gypsum production in 1995 reportedly decreased to 13,600 metric tons (t) compared with 14,600 t in 1994; crude steel production in 1995 reportedly fell to 299,000 t compared with 453,000 t in 1994; sand and gravel production in 1995 reportedly decreased to 376,100 t compared with 395,200 t in 1994; and lime production in 1995 reportedly decreased to 10,800 t compared with 15,900 t in 1994.

Cement production, however, reportedly increased in 1995 to 48,800 t compared with 39,100 t in 1994.

Denationalization and privatization continued in industry with the share of firms undergoing these processes having increased from 38% in 1994 to 62% in 1995.

Moldova was involved in a 2-year program financed by the Moscow-based Tokobank in conjunction with the Deutsche Bank to upgrade output and to double its steelmill's current capacity of 710,000 t/yr of crude steel and 500,000 t/yr of rolled products. The goal also is to bring output up to world quality standards to increase exports. In 1995 over 90% of the mill's output was exported, with exports going to China, Egypt, Finland, Germany, Hong Kong, Israel, Korea, Taiwan, and Turkey.

Moldova in 1995 remained almost entirely dependent on outside sources for its mineral raw material requirements. Moldova will continue to be dependent on finding outside sources of supply for minerals and was seeking to expand its suppliers beyond the FSU. It was also seeking to increase customers for its mineral output outside the FSU.

OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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