

Subject: Support for the environmental protection of the Hartz evaporite karst

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**TO WHOM IT CONCERNS**

Dear sirs,

In 1985 I started my doctoral thesis, which eventually resulted in the monograph “Gypsum Karstology”. During the years of my research, I had the opportunity to get to know almost all the most important gypsum karst areas of the world (Ukraine, New Mexico, Italy, Spain and also the Triassic gypsum of Germany).

The particularities of gypsum karst and especially its landforms and subterranean geomorphology have meant that most of the gypsum karsts have more or less powerful figures of environmental protection, such as the cases of the Venna del Gesso of Emilia Romagna (Italy), the Sorbas Gypsum Karst (Spain) or the case of the evaporitic karst area of Southern Hartz.

However, many of these areas, supposedly protected, are still in danger of disappearing due to the prominence of economic factors (gypsum mining, usually quarries) as opposed to the environmental interests of protecting and safeguarding not only the geological heritage but also, on many occasions, the botanical, zoological and even ethnological heritage, in violation of existing legislation.


From the Research Group on Water Resources and Environmental Geology, of which I am currently the director, we strongly support the request of the German Federation of Speleology and the other signatory organisations to immediately halt the prosecution of these mining projects that are threatening the evaporite karst of Hartz.

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