

MANAGING CONFLICTING INTERESTS BETWEEN QUARRYING AND EXPANDING URBANIZATION IN CASCAIS (PORTUGAL)

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The sterilization of mineral resources by unbalanced urban expansion is a most important limiting factor in today's sound development planning. Though mainly urban, Cascais area still contains large reserves of ornamental stone, but these are difficult to explore because of the pressure put on land use by building and other construction works interests. "Azul Cascais" is a local variety of ornamental limestone largely used in the last centuries in public buildings and mansions of Lisboa area and still has huge demand, namely for exportation. However the number of quarries is very rapidly decreasing, falling from around 20 in the eighties, till only two, at the present moment. With this trend of development not even the restoration needs in those ancient buildings that are now part of architectural heritage, could be guaranteed in the near future. Land-use planning and management is the task of municipal authorities; however, no major concern on mineral resources sound management appears to be reflected in the Municipal Plan approved in 1997, since only 30 hectares have been reserved for the extraction of "Azul Cascais". Because managing conflicting interests should be based on best available information the Research Centre on Applied Geosciences is carrying on a comprehensive study of the sedimentological, structural and geotechnical characteristics of the "Azul Cascais" limestone. The results of the study should serve as a scientific basis, enabling the relevant authorities to make a multipurpose plan for the temporary exploitation of the areas containing the best mineral reserves, before the ground is used for construction purposes.