

THE ROLE OF A GEOLOGICAL SURVEY IN THE MINING ACTIVITY OF A COUNTRY-THE EXAMPLE OF PORTUGAL

MARTINS, L. INSTITUTO GEOLÓGICO E MINEIRO, LISBOA, PORTUGAL.

Due to its structural and metallogenic characteristics, Portugal presents great potential for the economic occurrence of various metallic minerals.

These include precious metals and base metals and others such as tin, tungsten, nickel and chromium. The Instituto Geológico e Mineiro (IGM) has markedly and actively contributed to the inventorying, exploration and valuation of the portuguese metallic minerals.

This fact, in conjunction with the above mentioned geological characteristics and the present mining legislation, has been a determining factor for the portuguese mining sector. As such, it is one of the most active in the EC with world class production of copper, tin (Neves Corvo) and tungsten (Panasqueira), notwithstanding the important activity of exploration which during the 90's has shown the attribution of 50 different concessions to private operators some of which are known worldwide (Rio Tinto, Outokumpu, Phelps Dodge).

The author describes the geological and mining characteristics of the country, giving a retrospective view of the exploration activity during the 90's and touching briefly on some aspects of the portuguese mining legislation, showing how mining and sustainable development can be applied in an European country.