

**SALT AND BRINE PRODUCTION METHODS IN FRANCE: MAIN CONCLUSIONS
OF THE INTERNATIONAL GROUP (IEG) COMMISSIONED BY THE FRENCH
REGULATORY AUTHORITIES**

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PREFACE

In Spring 2002, the French regulatory authorities commissioned an international group of experts (IEG) to prepare a report on the major trends in salt mining techniques and abandonment methods; and to give recommendations emphasizing the long-term safety and environmental aspects of the Lorraine (Eastern France) salt mining.

The six members of the IEG were Pierre Bérest, Bill Diamond, Gérard Durup, Antoine Duquesnoy, Bernard Feuga and Lothar Lohff. The experts acted as individuals. Alain Buffet, a former engineer-geologist in a French salt mining company, and Ignace Salpeteur, acting as a scientific liaison with the contractor (Bureau de Recherches Géologiques et Minières, or BRGM) also took part in the IEG meetings.

The IEG had three plenary meetings in October 2002 at Bad Ischl, and in December 2002 and February 2003 in Paris. Hearings with solution-mining companies operating in France were organized.

At the meetings, the IEG invited several scientific experts to express their views. Comments from Yves Babot (Antea, France), Professor Emmanuel Ledoux (Ecole des Mines de Paris, France), David Challinor (Great Britain), Andrzej Kunstman (Kemchop, Poland), Roland Bekendam (The Netherlands) and Professor Pedro Ramirez (Madrid School of Mines, Spain) were especially helpful. Various working documents were prepared; one of which was presented during the Chester and Wichita SMRI Meetings (Bérest et al., 2003 and 2004). The IEG Report was published by BRGM in Fall 2003 under the reference BRGM/RP-52350-FR. The French regulatory authorities (Paul Cattaert, Head of the Underground Mining Department, Ministry of Industry) gave permission to publish the Main Conclusions of the

IEG Report. The present paper includes these conclusions (A few comments, bracketed for identification, have been added). The present Preface, Bibliography and several figures have been added.

The authors are saddened to note that Bill Diamond passed away a few days before the last IEG meeting. The IEG benefited from Bill's ethics, his insightful comments and his remarkable knowledge of the salt industry. His loss is deeply felt by the IEG members, as it is for the salt community worldwide.

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