

# 2013

The logo for Rise Project is a circular emblem divided into four quadrants of different colors: red (top-left), blue (top-right), orange (bottom-left), and green (bottom-right). In the center of the circle, the word "RISE" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font, with the word "PROJECT" in a smaller, black, sans-serif font directly below it.

## ANNUAL REPORT

[www.riseproject.ro](http://www.riseproject.ro)  
contact [ at ] [riseproject.ro](mailto:riseproject.ro)  
[www.facebook.com/RiseProjectRo](https://www.facebook.com/RiseProjectRo)

# ABOUT

RISE Project is an investigative journalism not-for-profit organization that uses advanced data research techniques and technology to generate reliable, hard hitting, investigative reporting. It was established in January 2012 by a group of Romanian investigative reporters, visual artists and programmers.

At RISE Project we produce investigative stories, databases as well as research and visualization tools. We educate other journalists and the public at large in researching complex corporate structures used by organized crime and corrupt officials to hide stolen public money.

RISE PROJECT is a member of the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project/OCCRP ([www.occrp.org](http://www.occrp.org)) and of the Global Investigative Journalism Network ([www.gijn.org](http://www.gijn.org)).

RISE Project members are founders of the OCCRP and of the Investigative Dashboard ([www.investigativedashboard.org](http://www.investigativedashboard.org)), a tool developed together with Google Ideas to help investigators track down the money and hidden assets of criminals and corrupt politicians.

RISE Project, OCCRP and Quickdata also created Visual Investigative Scenarios/VIS ([vis.occrp.org](http://vis.occrp.org)), a tool to visualize business and crime networks.

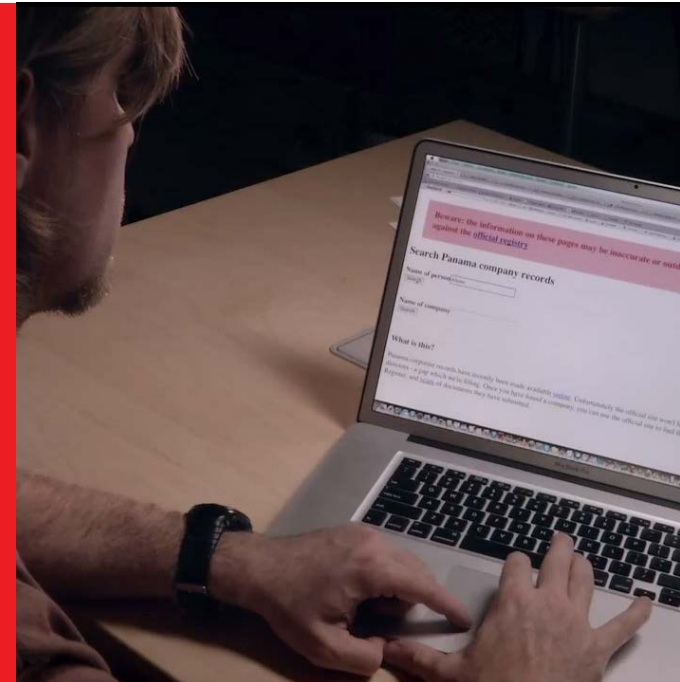


# AIM

To investigate organized crime and corruption in Romania and the region.

# HOW WE WORK

We follow the money across borders. We combine footwork with advanced investigative techniques and with data analysis to access hard to get records. We investigate the hidden connections between organized crime, politics and business and we visualize them.



# ACROSS BORDERS

We follow and expose organized crime networks across national boundaries. In 2013, our investigations took us from Romania to Cyprus, Panama, Colombia, Moldova, Hungary, Serbia, Iceland,

# OUR CURRENCY IS INFORMATION

In June 2013, Tactical Tech produced a documentary film about the work we do at RISE Project and at the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project/OCCRP. The film can be viewed online *here*.



# MEMBERS

RISE PROJECT members are experienced investigative journalists and researchers. Some are freelancers, others are also affiliated with local or international media outlets. Many have earned international recognition and prestigious awards such as “The Daniel Pearl Global Investigative Journalism Award”, “The Global Shining Light Award” and several Investigative Reporters and Editors Awards (IRE).

Paul Radu  
Mihai Munteanu  
Daniel Bojin  
Romana Puiulet  
Cristi Ciuperca  
Andrei Ciurcanu  
Laura Ranca  
Mihai Pogan

Matt Sarnecki  
Raluca Dan  
Ionut Stanescu  
Iurie Sanduta  
Radu Tutuianu  
Victor Ilie  
Mihai Dina





## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Most of the investigative work at RISE Project is done on a voluntary, no pay, basis. RISE members use their skills and donate their time to produce some of the finest investigative reporting.

In 2013 RISE received several medium-size grants from donor organizations and also benefitted from donations from the public.

## GRANTS

In 2012-2013, RISE Project was a partner in the Visual Investigative Scenarios (VIS) project financed by the International Press Institute (IPI) and Google Inc. The project duration was 12 months: June 2012 - June 2013, with a total budget of 71,100 Euro. RISE received 21,600 Euro for the research, coordination and communication activities within the project. The other project partners are the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) and Quickdata. VIS is a data visualization platform designed to assist investigative journalists, activists and the general public in mapping complex business or crime networks. It is available for free at: <http://vis.occrp.org/>.

In May 2013 RISE was awarded a 14,800 USD grant from the United States Embassy in Bucharest to conduct training on investigative

journalism techniques, data research and data visualization for reporters and civil society activists in Romania and the Republic of Moldova.

In June 2013, the Open Society Foundations' Media Program provided 24,900 USD for a series of investigative journalism and data visualization training sessions and cross-border collaborative projects throughout Central Eastern Europe and beyond.

## DONATIONS

In 2013, we received 2000 USD from public donations, allowing us to cover access fees to public records and reporters' travel costs for field research.

**We thank our generous supporters for their contributions to our investigative work!**

# INVESTIGATIONS



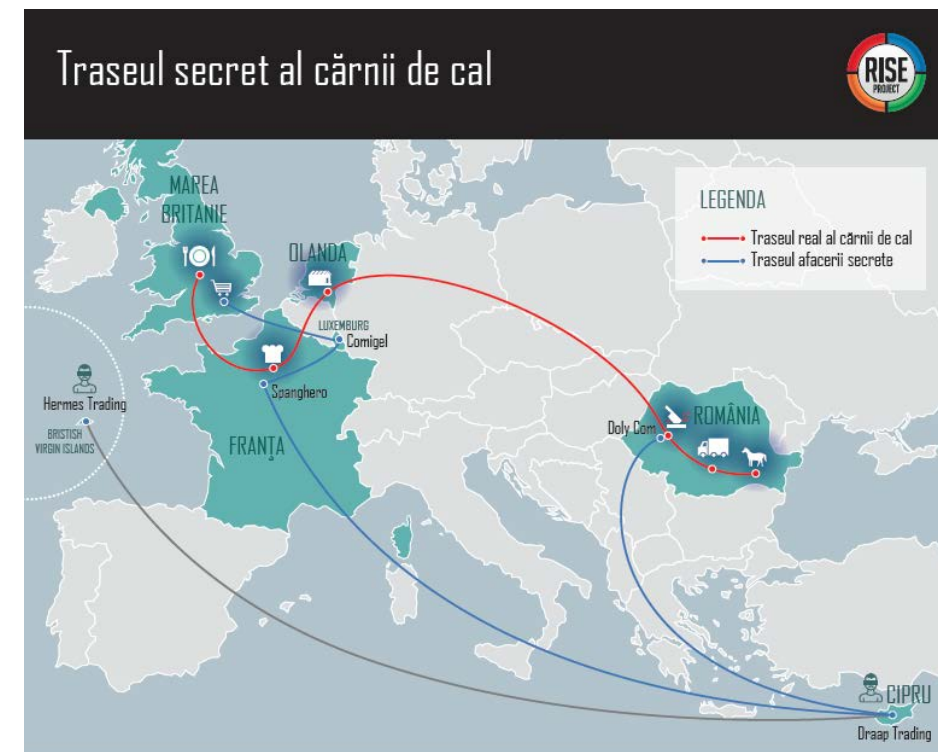


At RISE Project we make use of public databases and court records from all over the world. We apply innovative data processing and visualization technology to produce investigations that uncover local, regional and global organized crime and corruption networks. We perform rigorous fact-checking and we back our stories with thorough research and documents, which we publish on our website.

We collaborate with journalists and researchers from all over the world. Our thinking and research operate across borders to match the patterns of our investigation subjects. Organized crime and corruption networks are expanding, and so is our journalism.



For example, in March 2013 we cooperated with journalists in the United Kingdom, Moldova and Russia to uncover complex illegal business and criminal schemes behind a cross-border network of assassins-for-hire operating throughout Europe in “The Assassins’ Network” (<http://www.riseproject.ro/articol/reteaua-asasinilor/>). This investigation was a finalist at the European Press Awards.



We also worked with colleagues from the UK (The Guardian) and from the Netherlands to trace the people and offshore companies responsible for the well-known “Horse Meat Scandal” (<http://www.riseproject.ro/articol/intermediarii-secreti-din-afacerea-carnii/>), which led to horsemeat mislabeled as beef reaching consumers in England and other European countries.



# ARTICLE HIGHLIGHTS

In 2013, we exposed national and international cases of corruption and organized crime with critical social, economic and political impact:



## The Confidential Documents of the Roșia Montana Affair, Roșia Montana Gold Corporation Under Official Investigation in a Major Money Laundering Case

disclosed the secret agreements and corrupt practices surrounding the attempted exploitation of the biggest gold mine in Europe.



## The Ericsson Case - follow-up

following RISE Project/OCCRP investigations in 2012, Ericsson is now being investigated in the United States for its global business lobbying scheme that channeled money to public officials in Romania and other countries.



## The 'Street Dogs' Business

uncovered the controversies behind companies handling 'street dogs' in several Romanian cities - a business worth millions of euros.



## With Dirty Hands

a cross-border documentary investigating the secret routes of waste transports from Naples to factories in Romania, a business controlled by criminal groups from southern Italy connected to Romanian public officials.



## The Copper Mine

cross-border collaboration between Romania, Serbia and Russia to investigate the puzzles of a network that targets Romania's richest copper mine - a story involving secret services, masonry, offshore companies, Russian diplomats and corrupt judges.

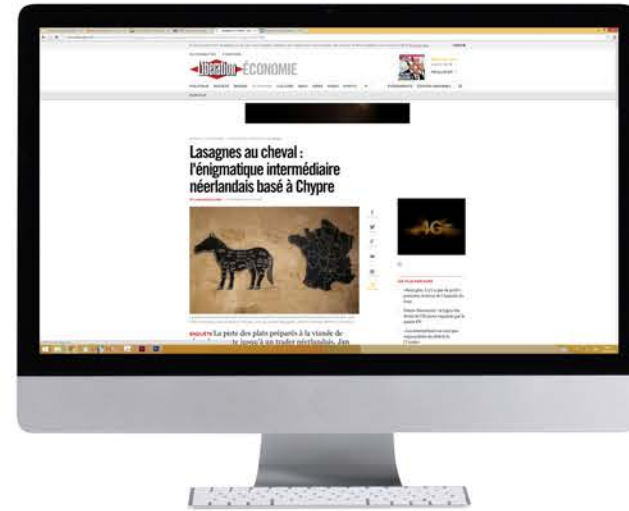


## The Offshores Machine - Cyprus Crisis

exposed offshore companies, controversial businessmen and politicians who took advantage of the collapse of the banking system in Cyprus.

# MEDIA PRESENCE

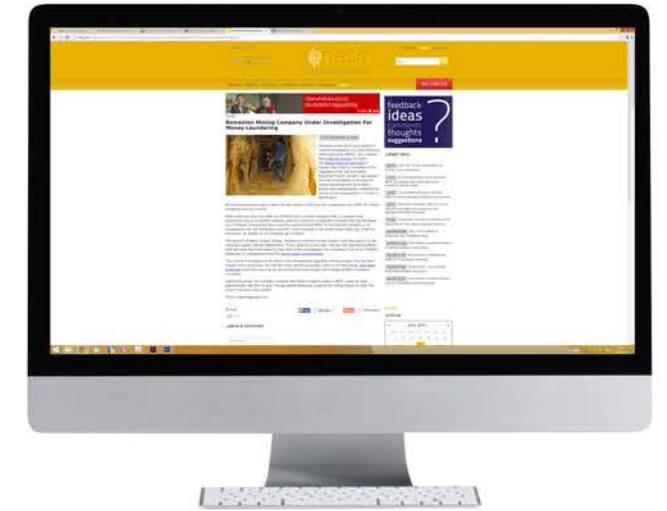
In 2013, our investigations and visualizations were cited and republished over 400 times in international and national media outlets: on-line, print, TV and radio.



Liberation  
liberation.fr



ORF - Austrian public service broadcaster  
orf.at



hetq.am  
Armenia

## International:



The Guardian  
theguardian.com



Ziarul de Garda - Republic of Moldova  
zdg.md



mining.com



National:



cotidianul.ro



Hotnews.ro



digi24.ro



adevarul.ro



romanialibera.ro



jurnalul.ro



radio europa fm  
europafm.ro



sursazilei.ro



paginademedia.ro



antena 3

# STATISTICS



In 2013,  
in 14 investigations  
we wrote 48 articles

in which we indexed

40 persons  
152 companies  
12 law suits

Between them we generated

731 connections

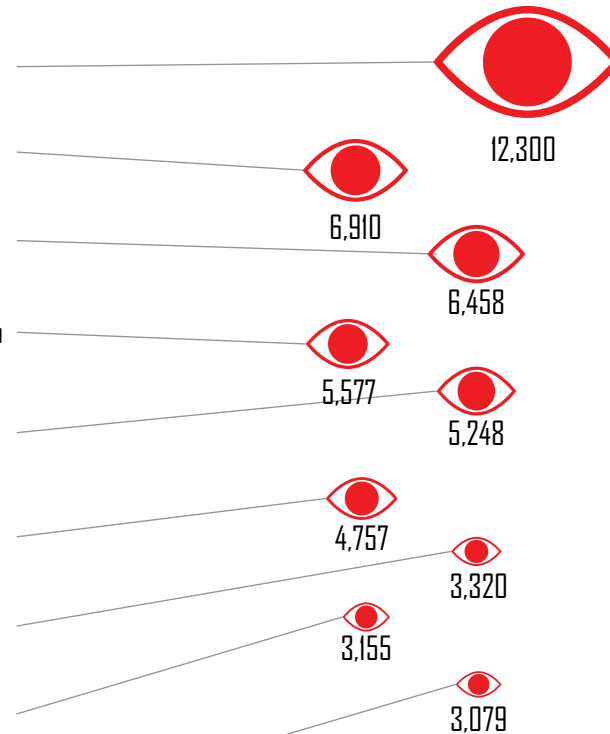
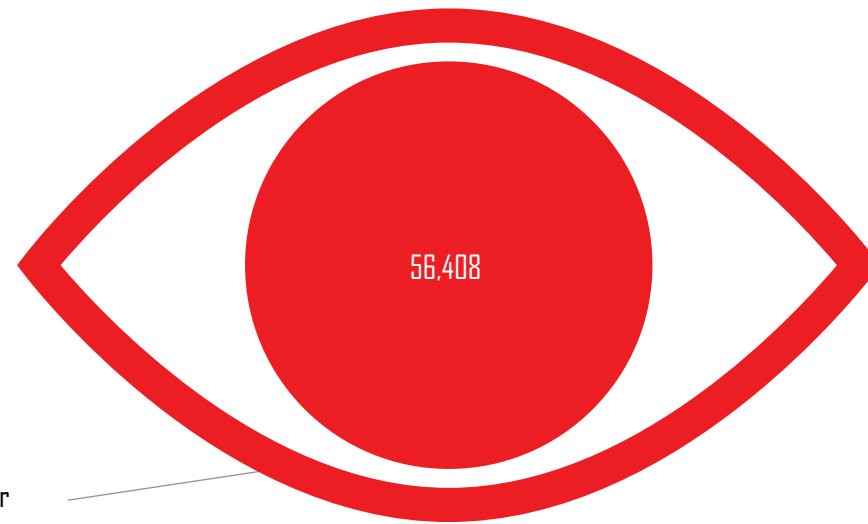
which we represented on our website  
through infographics and visualizations.



# TOP 10 ARTICLES

unique page views  
on [www.riseproject.ro](http://www.riseproject.ro)

- 1 The Confidential Documents of the Rosia Montana Affair
- 2 Who Did Rosia Montana Gold Corporation Pay in 2013?
- 3 The "Street Dog" Affair
- 4 The Rosia Montana Affair: Trips to Las Vegas and Rio for Government Employees
- 5 Rosia Montana Gold Corporation Under Official Investigation in a Major Money Laundering Case
- 6 Victor Ponta -Romanian prime minister and the Lawyer of Udrea-Cocos Family
- 7 The Gold Business: How and Why Cyanide Raises Profits
- 8 The Masonic Money Network
- 9 The Copper Mine
- 10 The Ones Who Will Remodel Bucharest



# TOP 10 ARTICLES

time spent  
on [www.riseproject.ro](http://www.riseproject.ro)



# CONNECTIONS AND EVIDENCE

RISE PROJECT is all about connections and evidence. With every new investigation we index and visualize all the entities (people, companies, lawsuits) and connections emerging in our research. To these we attach the proofs: documents, photos and video material, generating an ever-expanding database. Whenever a new entity is added, it connects to already existing data on our website making the investigative story more thorough and explanatory

By the end of 2013,  
our website database featured:

## 2,017 connections



to which we have attached

## 758 documents



**Our Website** - [www.riseproject.ro](http://www.riseproject.ro) - is much more than a publishing platform for our investigations. It is a complex and constantly expanding interactive visual database where we index people, companies, court cases, connections and related documents. It is a visual archive of the corruption and organized crime phenomena of our times.

# WEBSITE TRAFFIC AND SOCIAL NETWORKS

===== The most viewed visualization =====

## Trident Trust Company Cyprus

This company provided office and secretariat services for Draap Trading - the main company used to secretly ship mislabeled horsemeat all over Europe.

Related article: "The Secret Intermediaries in the Horsemeat Affair" (<http://www.riseproject.ro/articol/intermediarii-secreti-din-afacerea-carnii/>)

===== ★ The most accessed article =====

## "The Confidential Documents of the Rosia Montana Affair"

56,408 unique views

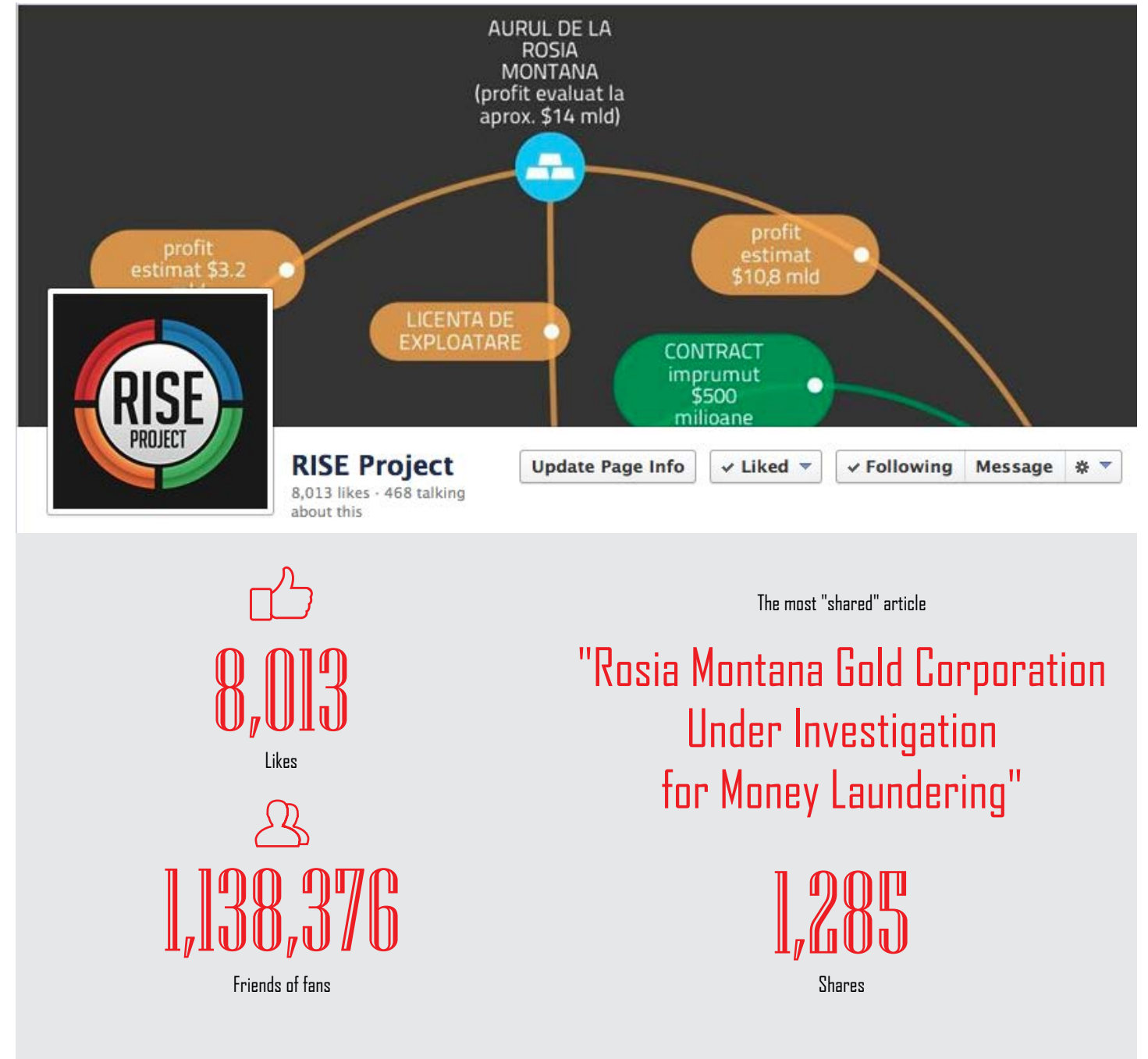
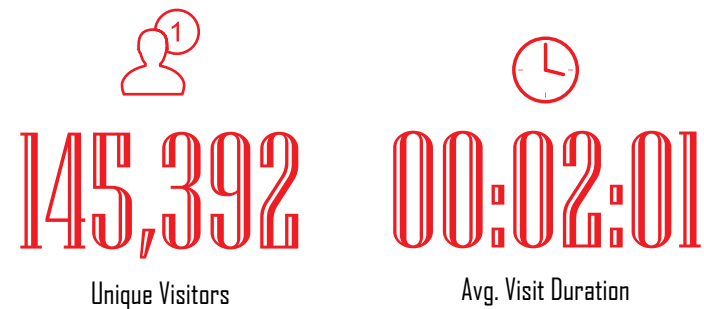
disclosed the secret agreements and corrupt practices allowing a controversial corporation to control the exploitation of the largest gold mine in Europe.



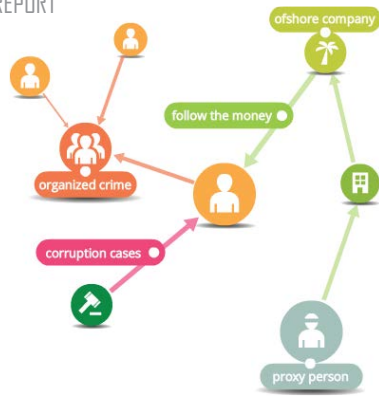
## WEBSITE STATISTICS



## FACEBOOK STATISTICS



# PROJECTS



# VISUAL INVESTIGATIVE SCENARIOS

VIS is a data visualization platform designed to assist investigative journalists, activists and others in mapping complex business or crime networks. It aims to help investigators understand and explain corruption, organized crime and other wrongdoings and to translate complex narratives into simple, universal visual language.

VIS was developed by RISE PROJECT, the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) and Quickdata, with funding from the International Press Institute (IPI).

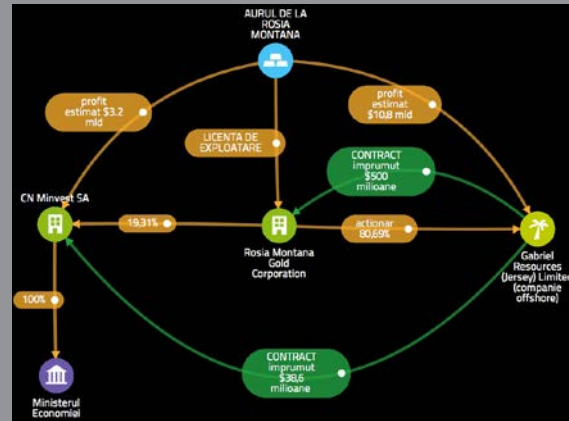
VIS was launched in June 2013 and is available for free in Open Beta version - <http://vis.occrp.org/>

In the second half of 2013

620 VIS accounts

were created  
by users from

70 countries

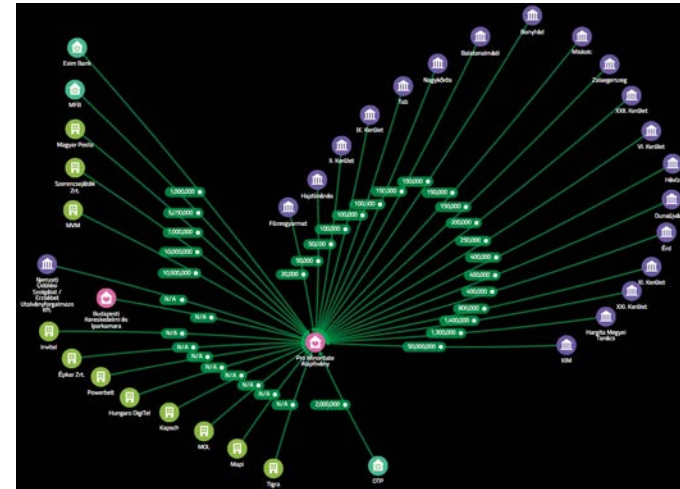


most viewed VISualization

# ROSIA MONTANA OWNERSHIP

43,394 views

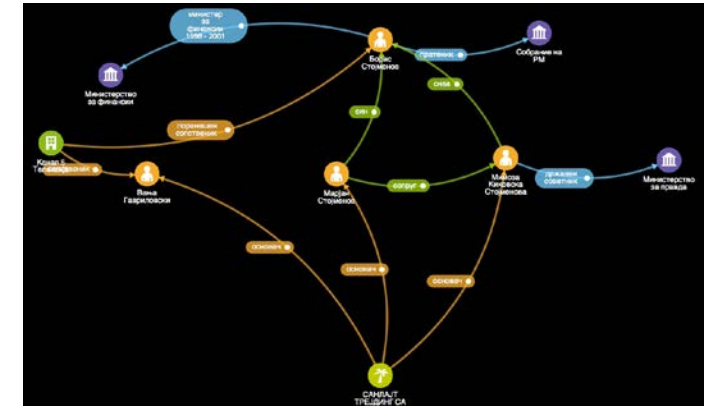
VISUALIZATIONS  
CREATED WITH VIS



## Atlatzo Oktatas (Hungary)

## The Transylvanian Connection - Public Money for Tuszányos

[http://atlatszootatas.blog.hu/2013/10/28/tusvanyos\\_484](http://atlatszootatas.blog.hu/2013/10/28/tusvanyos_484)

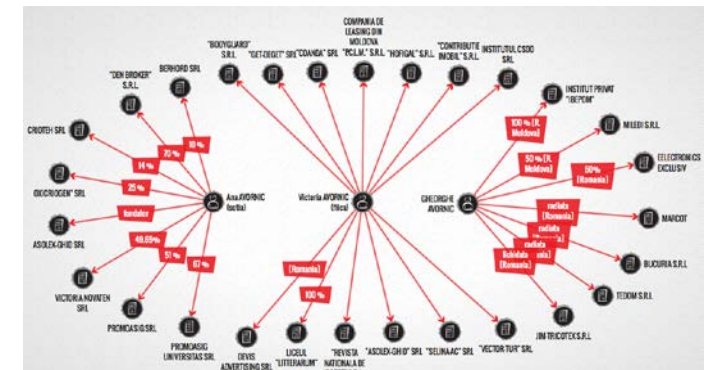


NovaTV.mk (Macedonia)

“Who are the Macedonians with offshore companies in Panama”

<http://novatu.mk/index>

*php?navig=8&cat=2&vest=11145*



Ziarul de Garda (Republic of Moldova)

“Vila și afacerile din România ale lui Gheorghe Avornic”

<http://www.zdg.md/investigatii/doc-vila-si-afacerile-din-romania-ale-lui-gheorghe-avornic>



# 'FOLLOW THE MONEY' HANDBOOK & VIDEO TUTORIALS

In February 2013, RISE Project launched a “Follow the Money” Handbook comprising investigative techniques and data sources on companies, people and court cases in Romania and in the Republic of Moldova. RISE members put together their research tools and advice and made them available to other journalists in the two countries. The Handbook was launched during a workshop with investigative journalists in Chișinău. It can be downloaded for free from our website (<http://www.riseproject.ro/ghid-de-investigatie-rise-project/>).

The Handbook is accompanied by several video tutorials on how to find company data from foreign public databases in Czech Republic, Switzerland, UK or the offshore heaven of Panama. These are available on our video page: <http://www.riseproject.ro/video/?id=1>





# TRAINING

## FOLLOW THE MONEY

In the second half of 2013, RISE PROJECT launched two training projects on “Advanced Techniques to Investigate and Visualize Organized Crime and Corruption” for journalists, activists and media students in Romania and abroad.

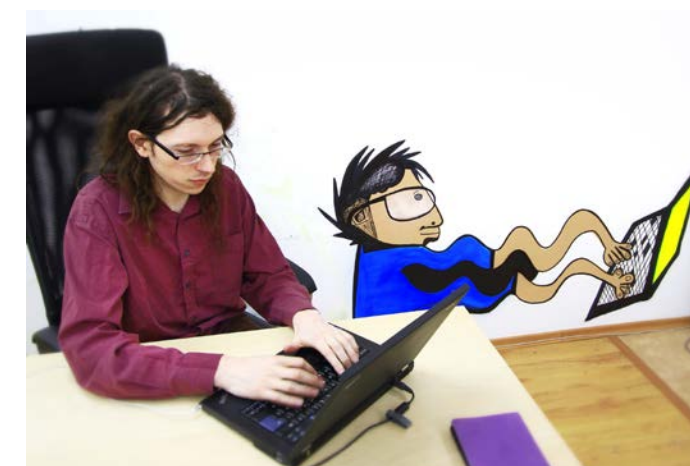
Our teams trained 150 journalists, activists and media students from Romania and the Republic of Moldova with financial support from the United States Embassy in Bucharest, and 180 participants from Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey, Jordan and Czech Republic with support from an Open Society Media Program grant.

Both projects will continue in the first half of 2014 with further workshops in Romania and in the region.



## CRYPTOPARTY

RISE is not only about investigative journalism but also about technology, security and advanced data processing techniques. We cooperate with programmers and civic (“white hat”) hackers in order to enhance the technical skills and online security of journalists investigating corruption and organized crime. In 2013, we organized a “cryptoparty” (<http://www.riseproject.ro/jurnalisti-si-hackeri-buni/>), an event where civic hackers and programmers trained activists and journalists on how to process data and how to protect themselves and their sources in the online environment. We will continue these events in 2014.



# ADVANCING SUPPORT FOR INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

Investigative journalism is often underrated and too poorly financed to achieve in-depth research and reporting on corruption and organized crime and to determine real changes in society.

We aim to change this.

In 2013, RISE Project and its partner network the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) cooperated with Members of the European Parliament and with the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) in order to strengthen the role of investigative reporting in fighting organized crime and corruption.

In April 2013, OCCRP and RISE co-organized a conference (<http://www.journalismfund.eu/event/follow-money-across-borders-brussels>) in the European Parliament aimed at offering a forum for debate for both investigative journalists and decision makers within the EU Institutions and interested stakeholders, on exposing concrete cases in which EU funds are diverted to the benefit of corruption and organized crime. The event convinced European stakeholders that investigative journalism should be placed higher up on the agenda of EU support for the media in the region.

**OCCRP**  
ORGANIZED CRIME AND CORRUPTION REPORTING PROJECT

# FOLLOW THE MONEY ACROSS BORDERS

**SPEAKERS**  
Giovanni Kessler  
Director General OLAF  
Representatives from  
DG Just, DG Home,  
DG Comm  
Investigative journalists  
from Europe

How supporting investigative journalism exposes cross border organized crime and corruption

**WEDNESDAY**  
10 april 2013  
12:30 - 15:00  
Room JAN 6Q1  
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT  
Sandwiches and refreshments offered

Organized by Monica Macovei MEP (EPP-Romania)  
and Bart Staes MEP (Greens, Belgium)

EPP Group | EUROPEAN GREEN EU | RISE PROJECT | IRPI | ATLATSZORU



# PLANS FOR 2014



Further development of Visual Investigative Scenarios (VIS) data visualization platform, including new themes, new functions and translation in several languages including Spanish, French and Arabic.



Training with journalists, activists and media students in Romania and abroad, and expansion of RISE Project's network of collaborators.



Video documentaries and multimedia investigative projects.



Launch of a People of Interest Romania database - including local and cross-border organized crime networks, corrupt individuals, their connections, business interests and criminal charges.