

PHOTOSTOP AT OPEN CAST MINE ERZBERG



Figure A3.21 ▲
Photograph of the Erzberg mine

Along the road from Gams to the south we will pass the town Eisenerz and the Erzberg ("iron mountain" of about 1500 m altitude). Numerous siderite mineralizations of various sizes occur in the Eastern Alps. Nowadays only the Erzberg mine is still operating with an iron ore production of about 1.4 million tons a year (Ebner et al., 2000). The total ore reserves of Erzberg are estimated as 200 million tons. Mining activities in the area date back to the 3rd century A.D. The open cast mine is situated in Paleozoic rocks of the Noric nappe complex of the Greywacke Zone, which forms the basement of the Northern Calcareous Alps. The majority of the ore are metasomatic bodies in Devonian limestones. The mineralizing event must have been post-Variscan as Permian conglomerates were affected by hydrothermal features. The ore bodies are cut off by thrust planes of late Early Cretaceous age. An early Triassic age of the mineralization has been proposed (Ebner et al., 2000).