

## Sedimentary Zeolite Deposits in Slovakia



- Exploited deposit
- Potential resources

1. NIŽNÝ HRABOVEC
2. MAJEROVCE
3. KUČÍN
4. VEĽKÁ TRŇA
5. BYŠTA
6. BARTOŠOVA LEHÔTKA – PASEKA
7. SKLENÉ TEPLICE

Zeolite occurring ubiquitously in exploited and unexploited deposits is *clinoptilolite*. *Mordenite* is also largely present at **Veľká Trňa** and **Byšta**. This report is limited to the presently exploited formations.

### NIŽNÝ HRABOVEC – MAJEROVCE – KUČÍN FORMATIONS

**Zeolite occurrence:** Clinoptilolite-rich tuff

**Geology:** The Eastern Slovakian basin with its basement of graben-synclinal structure was filled by Neogene clastic sediments, volcanogenic rocks and evaporites. The total thickness of the Neogene sequence reaches 7000 m. Diverse lithofacies were affected by volcanic activities of acidic to intermediate character, which continued during the whole Miocene period. Clay minerals and zeolites occur as the major or minor constituents of tuffs in the all Miocene stratigraphic stages (1-3). Zeolitization of stratiform character, showing vertical mineralogical zoning, constructed by clinoptilolite and analcime is associated exclusively with the bedded marine Lower Badenian sequence of rhyodacitic volcanoclastics, the so-called **Hrabovec tuffs** (1, 4).

**Mineralogy:** It is characterized by stable occurrence of clinoptilolite (mostly K,Ca-rich, e.g., in the Nižný Hrabovec occurrences), in association with low cristobalite, both as a result of silica glass alteration. Original pyrogenic minerals in the tuffs do not exceed 20% including quartz, plagioclases and sporadically chloritized biotite (5-7). Clinoptilolite content, regularly checked by X-ray diffractometry and other techniques, ranges between 50 and 90% throughout the deposit.



Aerial view of the Nizný Hrabovec deposit

A representative rock composition is as follows:

Phase	%
Clinoptilolite	84
Low cristobalite	8
Quartz	traces
Felspar	4
Illite	4
Carbonate (calcite)	<0.5

**Chemistry:**

***Clinoptilolite-bearing tuff***

*Chemical composition*

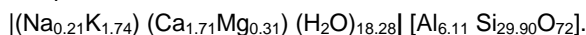
The following table reports the chemical composition of representative samples of clinoptilolite-bearing tuffs (wt. %)

Oxide	Nížný Hrabovec	Majerovce	Kučín
SiO <sub>2</sub>	66.97	69.40	67.07
Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	10.61	11.62	11.31
TiO <sub>2</sub>	0.24	0.13	0.20
Fe <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	1.72	1.28	1.45
MnO	0.03	0.01	0.02
CaO	2.90	2.78	2.91
MgO	0.73	0.90	0.99
K <sub>2</sub> O	2.96	2.82	2.73
Na <sub>2</sub> O	0.68	0.34	0.80
H <sub>2</sub> O	12.90	10.72	12.40

**Cation exchange capacity** The cation exchange capacity (CEC), estimated according to ČSN 72 1076 Czech National Standard, based on cation displacement by a  $\text{NH}_4^+$  solution, ranges from 1.2 to 1.5 equiv./kg.

### **Clinoptilolite**

**Chemical formula** The crystal chemical formula of clinoptilolite from a representative Nižný Hrabovec sample is:



**Crystallography** The unit cell parameters of clinoptilolite from Nižný Hrabovec are as follows:

a [Å]	b [Å]	c [Å]	$\beta$ [°]	V [Å <sup>3</sup> ]
17.79(2)	17.99(2)	7.43(1)	116.5(1)	2132 (4)

### **Physical and mechanical properties:**

Appearance (colour)	gray-green
Compressive Strength	33-41 MPa
Rock porosity	24-32%
Effective pore diameter	0.4 nm
Density	2200-2440 kg/m <sup>3</sup>
Bulk density	1600-1800 kg/m <sup>3</sup>
Thermal stability	400°C

**Reserves and production:** Estimated zeolite reserves are in the order of 9,500,000 tons. Annual production capacity is roughly 200,000 tons with reference to ground zeolites and 20,000 tons as regards granular zeolites.

**Main applications:** The main fields of use of Nižný Hrabovec material are::

(a) *Agriculture* Covers some 70-80% of zeolite production, especially in the following areas:  
soil additive;  
crop protection;  
constituent of three-component mineral fertilizers;  
component of feeding mixtures for animals;  
litter additive (8-14).

(b) *Industry and environment* Wastewater, sewage and drinking water purification;  
dust and flue gas cleaning;  
filler in several industrial products (rubber, paper, wood).

(c) *Construction* Component of cement and concrete composites (15-19);  
geosynthetic clay liner (20, 21).

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