

A lithium mine in Serbia an opportunity for the country's progress or an environmental catastrophe?

At the gathering "Project Jadar - What is known", organized by the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Zorana Mihajlovic, Minister of Mining and Energy, stated that mining and environmental protection must go together and that Serbia should not stand in place and renounce progress but the technology used in the mine must conform to the principles of environmental protection.

According to her, the deposit of jadarite in our country is one of the largest in Europe, and considering that lithium is extracted from that mineral, Serbia would, in the case of mine construction, become a significant deposit of that resource from which batteries for electric cars are made. She wondered whether Serbia is rich enough to give up something like that, and pointed out that the need for lithium is growing in the world, and that by 2050, demand will increase about 60 times, which will affect the growth of its price. She pointed out that the ore rent in Serbia is low and should be increased, and that the proposal of the Ministry of Mining and Energy is that it amounts to eight to 10 percent of the income. Also, Minister Mihajlovic emphasized that the plan is for Serbia to stop producing electricity from thermal power plants in 20 to 30 years.

The President of the Committee for the Environment of SANU, Vladimir Stevanovic, emphasized that, regardless of the fact that it is declaratively announced that everything in the "Jadar" project will be ecologically safe, it remains a matter of doubts, because the project was non-transparent from the beginning. lithium in Serbia exaggerated.

- On one side, we should put how much forests cost, land that can be destroyed, for example by converting it into construction land, then water pollution, and on the other side, profit and see what Serbia gains and what it loses - said Stevanovic.

Vesna Prodanovic, General Manager of Rio Sava Exploration, a subsidiary of the British-Australian mining company Rio Tinto, which is researching the possibility of exploiting Jadarite in the vicinity of Loznica, stated that the Jadar plant should start operating in 2027 and pointed out that Jadarite is the only lithium-containing mineral that is crucial for Europe and the world. She expressed hope that the "Jadar" project will influence the attraction of new and related investments.

- Rio Tinto came to Serbia because of the wrinkles in 2001, and the discovery of lithium was not unexpected, but that it was not a metal of special commercial interest at the time, but only after 2010. The mine will be underground, not surface mine, there will be no acid waste, the processing process does not generate waste vapors, the content of toxic metals in the ore is low and the project will respect the valid legislation - Vesna Prodanovic pointed out.

The Dean of the Faculty of Forestry, Ratko Ristic, warned that Jadar is a very flooded area

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and emphasized that the question is how to guarantee that harmful substances from landfills do not enter the Jadar River and reach Belgrade. He emphasized that it is impossible to guarantee that the negative influences will be of a local character.

- Biodiversity is especially endangered by the project because there are strictly protected plants and animals in that area and there are cultural goods in the vicinity such as the monasteries of Tronos and Trsic which are also part of the tourist destination and nothing will happen if a mine is built. There is also a plan to relocate the local population. Today, a "pink presentation" of Rio Tinto was heard, while I received examples from the work of that company regarding the emigration of the population, water and air pollution, mass infections of the upper respiratory tract, disposal of toxic materials, creation of tailings that are constant sources of pollution. As far as I am concerned, the print of Rio Tinto is unacceptable in the world - Ristic emphasized.

Source: danas.rs