

At the end of 2022, the exploitation of silver, lead, zinc, barite, but also gold, perhaps copper, should begin in Vareš.

- At the very mention, everyone immediately turns to gold, there is also it, but there is more silver, so we could talk about the silver mine project sooner, especially since its market price has doubled in the last six to twelve months - says Adnan Teletović, executive director of the company Eastern Mining, which has a concession in Vareš. They were founded by the British company Adriatic Metals.

Vareš metal ores have always been known, iron was mined in Roman times, and Teletović says that we are talking about deposits of polymetallic ore, which is unique in the world: lead, zinc and barite are accompanied by precious metals, which have not been explored before.

- At the site of the former Energoinvest plant in Tisovci, where the ore was processed in the eighties, but without silver and gold, we will also work. We have already moved the company's headquarters from Sarajevo to Vareš. The mine will be located in two locations: one is Veovača, in the area of Pržić and Daštanski, where there was a surface mine before, and the other is Rupice, in the area of Borovica, where there will be a pit mine, and this deposit is richer in precious metals - Teletović and Aleksandar Vučković, chief geologist, born in Belgrade explain.

Teletović holds a doctorate in technical sciences from Australia, worked at a Ford foundry there and at the gold mines of the world's largest mining company, BHP. Vučković also brings a rich Australian experience.

- By law, we must investigate and report all findings. In three years, we have drilled 35,000 long meters of wells. A very important question is how to separate the metals from the concentrate, but we hope that in two years - and much depends on the issuance of all possible permits - Rupice will start first, at a depth of 150 to 300 meters. Processing would be in Tisovci, where we are now - says the executive director.

Teletović and Vučković say the exploitation could take 12 to 15 years, and the estimated earnings at current values, which can change for the better and for the worse, "weigh" \$ 917 million. That is how the company reported to the stock exchanges. The investment is at about \$ 180 million.

They currently employ 50 workers, plus 70 in partner companies. The mines will have a maximum of 350 employees at full capacity, but Teletović points out that there are seven accompanying jobs for each job in mine.

Vareš municipality should also benefit from all this: 70 percent of the concession fee remains with the municipality, which is another municipal budget per year. Since the

company's headquarters are in Vareš, part of the tax belongs to the municipality.

The company points out that the relationship with the local community is very important to them, which was initially distrustful due to bad experiences from the past.

- We want the people who live here to know what is happening, they are an important link for us to obtain permits and approvals. That is why we have established a Local Community Relations Committee, out of 27 members, 23 are from the community. Part of the earnings will go to a special foundation from which environmental, health and education programs will be financed - the company's leading people point out.

- A lot has been done, people are aware of the mining history of Vareš and hope for a new shine. Environmental protection and health are very important to them, just like us. It used to be done with Russian technology and people were cheated. My family is from here, here from Daštanski, and if someone had told me ten years ago that I would work here - I would not have believed him. We are a socially responsible company, focused on working with the community. Respecting the laws of our country, we follow international standards of environmental protection and social management, which we will continue to do - says Aida Ahmedović, the company's coordinator for relations with the local community, also a master of health and environment.

Whether the mines will bring improvement or ruin remains to be seen. So far, only one Borovičanin works in a mining company. There is a long tradition of mining here, as early as the Middle Ages the Saxons, top masters, were brought here. It was rumored that our steel, along with the one from Damascus, was the best for weapons. The mine is on state land, so there is no major purchase, and the question of ore transport is still open - whether it will go by cable car or the roads will break through.

- We expect that the money from concession fees will stabilize the municipal budget and that every year it will be possible to invest one million euros in infrastructure. The company itself will invest in railways, roads and the like, they will need to transport the ore. And each place in mining brings ten others; in processing, equipping, maintenance, services, transport ... The project is important for Vareš, the canton and the state, it could define this area for the next fifty years, with technology without harmful emissions, which requires the education of new professionals, but also allows return our staff, as well as the arrival of experts from other areas - emphasizes the mayor.

Well-known Vareš entrepreneur Zdravko Barkić, owner of the textile company Profi-tex, worked as a young economist in Energoinvest's old mine, which was bought by current investors. He says that even then it was known that Borovica ore was of better quality than Przicka, but there were no funds for extensive research.

A mining town in Bosnia, Vareš lies at a billion dollars in silver and gold

- The mine failed because the ore could not be processed in the capacities of the former Yugoslavia due to the mercury content in the ore from Veovača, and larger quantities of mercury can be dangerous to health. What is the situation in Rupice when it comes to mercury - I don't know, technologists could say more. There are prospects, but we will have to import professional staff again. We used to have a strong industry and we educated people, so even today in Rijeka the Vareš staff works in the metal industry, and that is often a condition of the competition for new jobs - says Barkić.

Although he does not believe that Vareš will be what it used to be, he still hopes that it will be better than it is today:

- Everything is neglected, and the sawmill in the middle of the forest managed to collapse. Political parties, because that's how it was done even then, they tore everything up, robbed it, took it away. Vareš experienced perhaps the biggest robbery in BiH. And it was not destroyed in the war, but was looted afterwards, which is especially sad.

Source: slobodnadalmacija.hr