

Požega is the third place in Serbia, after Loznica and Valjevo, where geological research on lithium is about to be conducted. The demand for the metal is increasing due to its use in the production of batteries for electric vehicles. Mining companies are continuing their plans with support from the government, despite the growing opposition among the residents in the area and throughout Serbia.

Activists from Initiative for Požega accidentally discovered a notice on the municipality's website that the company Jadar Lithium would start geological research on April 17. The chiefs of nine villages in the Požega area and local people are against drilling for lithium on their land. The discontent over endangering human health and the potential environmental damage was demonstrated by 60,000 signatures against the Rio Tinto mine, but also with the recent Ecological Uprising. As in the case of Loznica villages, the residents of Požega villages were not officially informed that geological research would be carried out on their meadows and fields.

"We are surprised, and worried!" said Svetlana Avramović from the Initiative for Požega. The municipality published a notice on its webpage but the residents were not informed. The non-governmental organization accidentally discovered the notice about the beginning of geological research on the website of the Municipality of Požega.

"We were stunned because we all know about Loznica and what is happening there," she added.

The notice revealed Jadar Lithium has informed the municipality about the works scheduled to start on April 17. The company said that at the beginning of March that it received a license from the Ministry of Mining and Energy for geological research of lithium, boron and accompanying ores in the area of Dobrinja, at ten locations. The owner of Jadar Lithium is Australia-based Victory West Moly.

The research wells will be drilled in eight villages in the municipality of Požega: Duškovci, Dražinovići, Velika Ježevica, Mađer, Gornja Dobrinja, Srednja Dobrinja and Donja Dobrinja, Papratište, as well as in Subjela in neighboring Kosjerić.

Euro Lithium Balkan: We found low-grade lithium ore near Valjevo

Euro Lithium Balkan, owned by Canada's Euro Lithium, has confirmed that it is exploring lithium in the vicinity of Valjevo. However, it is unclear whether opening a mine would be economically viable, because the company found a low-grade ore, Nova ekonomija reported. "Research and analysis are at an early stage, but so far it has been determined that there is lithium in the area," said the company's executive director Petr Palkovski, adding that it has not been determined whether the resource is economically viable for exploitation.

Research can be stopped legally, or by the people

Initiative for Požega has decided to inform the residents and village chiefs of the developments. It organized a meeting in the village of Srednja Dobrinja. About a hundred people gathered in the local hall two days ago.

Members of activist group Protect Jadar and Rađevina told the audience about the troubles of the people in Loznica area since Rio Tinto started geological research and preparations for the construction of a mine.

It is paramount to prevent drilling because the research itself damages the environment, the representatives of the Initiative for Požega said.

The organization has submitted several requests to the Municipality of Požega and the ministry in order to obtain project documentation and accompanying files, but also to prevent the geological research.

According to Initiative for Požega, there are two solutions: stop the research legally or the people will do it.

"The locals said at the gathering that they oppose the research. At the same time, dismay and disbelief was evident on their faces but so was the determination not to allow the research to begin," Avramović said.

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