The Chinese mining company Zijin (Zijin Mining) states in its sustainability reports that it has **succeeded in reducing air pollution** in Bor, where it owns a copper mine and smelter.

Ziđin's report for 2020 mentions the incident that caused excessive air pollution in Bor in September of that year, that the event attracted a lot of public attention, but it is also emphasized that air pollution in Bor existed decades ago.

In those reports, the company does not state that it was fined one million dinars for **air pollution** in 2020. The so-called are available on the Internet. This company's ESG reports in English for 2019, 2020 and 2021.

And what is the real situation?

The City of Bor publishes air quality data on its portal daily, using data from the Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA).

For example, for March 14, 2023, it is stated that the hourly concentration of sulfur-dioxide (SO2) was not exceeded, as well as that there was an exceedance of suspended PM 2.5 and PM 10 particles at the measuring site Gradski Park.

At the same measuring point, there were no pollution exceedances from March 10 to 13, but PM particle emission exceedances were recorded in the previous days.

The city of Bor, where the company **Zijin Copper** operates, is one of the cities in Serbia with the longest negative tradition of excessive environmental pollution, Dejan Lekić from the National Ecological Association (NEA) and the creator of the air pollution measurement application xEco explains for New Economy.

Despite the beginning of the reconstruction of the smelter, overruns were recorded

This is reflected in a large number of exceedances of the permitted concentrations of **SO2** in the air both on an hourly and daily basis.

"Thus, despite the beginning of the reconstruction of the smelter in April 2022, in the first three months there were 39 exceedances of the average hourly limit value (350 µg/m3, i.e. micrograms per cubic meter, and it is allowed 24 times for the whole year), i.e. four exceedances of the average daily values (125 µg/m3, allowed three times for the whole year)", explains our interlocutor.

As Lekić reminds, according to official SEPA reports, a large number of overruns were also recorded in 2021 (156 hours with overruns, i.e. 19 days with overruns at Bor Gradski park station), 2020 (374 hours, or 58 days), 2019 (a total of 41 days).

Arsenic concentrations 350 times higher than annual values

"In the public the information about exceeding the target values of heavy metals in the

fractions of PM10 particles is often neglected, so in 2021, according to the official SEPE report, at the Bor Jugopetrol station, an average annual concentration of arsenic (As) of 132 ng/m3 (nanograms per cubic), while the target value for the whole year is 6 ng/m3, so it was even 22 times higher than the target.
Exceeding arsenic concentrations were also recorded at other measuring points in the same year in Bor." At the same location, the target value of cadmium concentration was slightly exceeded, while for nickel it was equal to the target value, adds the NEA representative.
"It should be noted that these are average annual concentrations and that the maximum daily concentrations reached an enormous 2,088 ng/m3 for arsenic or 89 ng/m3 for cadmium." For the sake of illustration, this maximum daily value for arsenic is 348 times higher than the annual target value," adds Lekić.