

Copper mine in Majdanpek, Serbia to drastically increase flotation without Environmental Impact Assessment

Increase of flotation capacities result in increase of the impact of flotation on the water, air and soil, on waste generation and energy consumption, and it is impossible to separate these processes through two separate studies. Therefore, if the tailings are separated and if there is no control of the entire production process, it is impossible to determine the impact of the project on the environment. RERI and Association of Young Researchers Bor submitted the appeals to the Government of the Republic of Serbia against the decision that for the increase of flotation capacities from 6.000.000 t to 11.000.000 t per year of the copper mine in Majdanpek it is not necessary that Serbia Zijin Copper develop EIA study. Company Serbia Zijin Cooper is planning to drastically increase the flotation capacities within copper mine in Majdanpek, for which they submitted request for deciding on the need for EIA in July 2020. However, the investor excluded the flotation tailings disposal project. Ministry of Environmental Protection on 14 September issued the decision that Serbia Zijin Copper is not obliged to develop environmental impact assessment (EIA) study for increase of flotation of the copper mine in Majdanpek.

Namely, as the flotation is a technological procedure of separating useful from useless ingredients of mineral raw materials, the flotation tailings are formed as the final product of copper ore processing in flotation, which potentially produces the most negative impacts on the environment. If a separate study on EIA for tailings disposal were made, it would not be possible to accurately assess the overall impact of flotation tailings caused by flotation on the environment.

„Tailings disposal is part of the technological process and cannot be separated from the project, especially because it has an impact during tailings formation, flotation plant operation and long-term after cessation of exploitation. I am afraid that using this approach, after the completion of flotation, Serbia will get another forgotten mining landfill, of which there are already more than two hundred“ emphasized Toplica Marjanović, an environmental engineer and former employee of RTB Bor.

In addition, the Ministry made a serious procedural omission which makes this decision unlawful, as the entire request with accompanying documentation was not published on the Ministry's website (such as the conceptual design, excerpt from the urban plan, conditions of the Institute for Nature Preservation, etc.), and thus the public could not be informed about the project and submit adequate comments. As follows, the public was denied the opportunity to actively participate in the EIA procedure.

RERI and the Association of Young Researchers Bor herewith express their deep concern over the neglect of the essential purpose of the EIA procedure, which is to identify significant environmental impacts before issuing project approvals and to identify effective

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mechanisms to eliminate or reduce negative impact. At the same time, we appeal to the competent Ministry and the Government of the Republic of Serbia to ensure consistent application of regulations and oblige all polluters to abide by the law in the field of environmental protection.

Source: reri.org.rs