

The Chinese firm intends to boost the copper mine's output capacity to 11 tons per year from six million. It asked the government in July to determine if an EIA was needed, but excluding the flotation tailings disposal project, the Renewables and Environmental Regulatory Institute RERI said. The Renewables and Environmental Regulatory Institute and the Association of Young Researchers from Bor filed a complaint with the Government of Serbia against the decision to allow Zijin to expand a copper mine without a comprehensive environmental impact assessment study.

The Ministry of Environmental Protection of Serbia said in September that Serbia Zijin Copper is not obliged to conduct an environmental impact assessment (EIA) study for the planned increase of flotation of the copper mine in Majdanpek. RERI, based in Belgrade, and the Association of Young Researchers from Bor, the town near Majdanpek where the company is based, submitted a complaint with the Government of Serbia against the decision.

Separate study wouldn't calculate overall impact

Flotation is a procedure of separating useful from useless ingredients of mineral raw materials and flotation tailings are formed as the final product of copper ore processing in flotation. The stage may have the most negative impacts on the environment. If a separate study on EIA for tailings disposal was made, it would not be possible to accurately assess the overall impact of flotation tailings caused by flotation on the environment, the think tank stressed.

"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 in the long-term, after cessation of exploitation. I am afraid that with the approach, Serbia will get another forgotten mining landfill, of which there are already more than two hundred, after the completion of flotation," said Toplica Marjanović, an environmental engineer and former employee of mining complex RTB Bor, which Zijin took over two years ago.

Ministry's decision was unlawful

An increase in flotation capacity results in a stronger impact of flotation on water, air, and soil as well as on waste generation and energy consumption, and it is impossible to separate the processes through two separate studies, RERI underscored. It said that if the tailings are separated and if there is no control over the entire production process, it is impossible to determine the impact of the project on the environment. The ministry's decision is

unlawful as the documentation on the mine in eastern Serbia wasn't published on its website, the activist organization said, pointing to unknown conceptual design and urban plan and the conditions imposed by the Institute for Nature Conservation and other factors. The public was denied the opportunity to participate in the EIA procedure, RERI said.
Source: balkangreenenergynews.com