

The commercial hoarding of Macedonia started while in power, state and local, was the VMRO-DPMNE was not suspended by the party's departure to the opposition. As in its geographical position (next to neighboring Bulgaria) lies rich deposits of gold and copper, in 2012 government passed a law that allowed easier entry of foreign direct investments into the mining sector. Since then, until June this year, after the formation of a new government led by Social Democrat Zoran Zaev, there are 378 active concession contracts, both for the exploration of mineral resources and for their exploitation.

Familiar with the risks of opening the mines in their immediate vicinity, residents of endangered municipalities have begun to resist resistance to mining projects in the spring. In four municipalities in the southeast of Macedonia, thanks to the collected signatures of citizens, organized referendums voting on mines (in the municipality of Gevgelija against the opening of gold mines in the nearby mountain Kozuf and in the municipalities of Bogdanci, Dojran and Valandovo against the opening of the copper mines and gold Kazandol), among to which only one, the one in Valandovo, although with the excess of votes against the mines (95 percent), was not declared valid because half of the registered voters responded.

Undermining democracy

Local referenda have mobilized people, but mining projects continue despite opposition from the public. Currently, the works at Kazandol are in full swing, led by the company Sardic MC, behind which is British-Ukrainian capital. They stated that they “strongly believe that their intention to invest, create new jobs and stimulate local economic development will be recognized by Prime Minister Zoran Zaev ... and that this project will be realized as a general good for the state, municipalities and citizens” . And they did not make a mistake. While in October during the local elections campaign, Zaev in his speech in Valandovo was determined and announced the stopping of works that - without forgetting to emphasize - launched the past government, after the election that determination began to weaken. Finally, he pledged this promise, arguing that unilateral termination of the contract would cost Macedonia more than 70 million euros.

The concessionaire himself violated the terms of the contract he signed with the former minister of economy in 2015. ” For example, a copper cathode production plant has not been built or its production started, and this should have occurred within two years. However, the alleged fear of too expensive an interruption of cooperation is in fact an attempt to justify its continuation. Such a relation of the prime minister to the important health, ecological and economic problems of the people, solving which presupposes concern for the interests of investors, is yet another indicator of his “takeover of neoliberal relay”, as

well as the apprehension of two activists of the civic initiative “Save Valandovo” for an informative interview with the police. they ventured into the private space of the future mine.

In spite of everything, ignoring their will expressed at the referendum and the mentioned intimidation, citizens will not easily give up. Tomorrow, its ecclesiastical holiday will walk through the streets of Valandovo, and during the same gathering it will be able to exchange experiences with activists from the region - Romania, Greece and Bulgaria - at least it can be seen that the borders do not exceed capital alone.

Source: bilten