

UK-based Mineco dismissed public concerns about cross-border river pollution from a lead, zinc and copper mine it operates under trial mode near Serbia's Bosilegrad, saying the concentration of these metals in the water is within the permissible levels.

"Lead, zinc and copper in the water are in concentrations that are identical with values before the pilot plant's start of operation, and are at least ten times lower than the permissible limit values," Mineco told SeeNews in an e-mailed statement.

Meeting his Serbian counterpart Goran Trivan on Tuesday, Bulgarian environment minister Neno Dimov requested that the authorities of the two countries conduct a joint environmental impact study of the Karamanica mine after alleged pollution of the cross-border Dragovistica river caused protests in Bulgaria's western town of Kyustendil.

The Dragovistica river, which runs through Bosilegrad and several Western Bulgarian municipalities, is a tributary of Struma river, which in turn flows south to Greece and the Mediterranean.

Mineco does not have information on the pollution of the Dragovistica river, but it monitors the Bezimeni stream, located in the immediate vicinity of the mine, which is a tributary of the Dragovistica, the company told SeeNews. "All previous analyses showed the correctness of water in the Bezimeni stream," the company commented.

The Bosilegrad mine uses a closed system which collects the water in a pool above the flotation pilot plant. From there, the water is pumped to a second pool, in order to return to the flotation where fresh water is added to prevent pollution, Mineco said.

On January 16, Kyustendil citizens rallied in front of the Environment Ministry building in Sofia, accusing the government of doing nothing to prevent pollution from the Karamanica mine.

Mineco launched test pilot production at the mine in 2017 and is currently building commercial ore processing plant. The company has invested about \$15 million (13.2 million euro) in Bosil-Metal so far.

Source: [seenews.com](http://seenews.com)