

“If we link that news to the fact that the politicians in power are lobbying so much for one [Rio Tinto project](#) after numerous independent experts declared that lithium mining will ecologically destroy Serbia, their motives seem very suspicious,” Manojlovic says for Danas daily.

He recalls that, before the elections, certain politicians in power said that they were done with Rio Tinto and that [lithium mining](#) was a finished story.

“They agreed to meet the demands of the people, have changed the relevant regulation and now they are starting to lobby for this company again.

At the same time, we hear that Rio Tinto settled with the **American Securities Commission (SEC)** to pay a fine of 15 million dollars, after an investigation into bribery in which a consultant from Guinea was also involved,” Manojlovic adds.

To remind, the **Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)** announced charges against global mining and metals company, Rio Tinto plc, for violations of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) arising out of a bribery scheme involving a consultant in Guinea.

**The company has agreed to pay a \$15 million civil penalty to settle the SEC’s charges.**

The SEC’s order finds that, in July 2011, Rio Tinto hired a French investment banker and close friend of a former senior Guinean government official as a consultant to help the company retain its mining rights in the Simandou mountain region in Guinea.

The consultant began working on behalf of Rio Tinto without a written agreement defining the scope of his services or deliverables. Eventually the mining rights were retained, and the consultant was paid \$10.5 million for his services, which Rio Tinto never verified.

The SEC’s investigation uncovered that the consultant, acting as Rio Tinto’s agent, offered and attempted to make an improper payment of at least \$822,000 to a Guinean government official in connection with the consultant’s efforts to help Rio Tinto retain its mining rights, Serbian Monitor reports.