

The list of signatories of Rio Tinto's consent to lithium research in the Jadar River Valley includes politicians from almost all ruling parties since 2004, from Deputy Ministers George Mihailovic and Dejan Rakovic to Ministers Aleksandar Popovic, Petar Skundric, Milan Bacevic and Aleksandar Antic. Unlike cheap statements, such decisions can be extremely expensive and harmful.

It is no coincidence that Zorana Mihajlovic was appointed the new Minister of Mining and Energy. While she was the head of the Ministry of Construction, the Spatial Plan for Special Purposes for the Lithium Mine Area was adopted almost overnight, while neglecting (skipping) higher planning acts such as the Spatial Plan of Serbia, the General Urban Plan of Loznica and the Spatial Plan of Loznica. It should be emphasized that the state gave this project the status of national importance and thus avoided the declaration of the locals, practically putting itself on the side of the company Rio Tinto. While in Loznica in June, President Vučić wanted to "jump out of his skin" because the project was late, and only a few months later, after the citizens' protest, he stated that those who brought Rio Tinto to Serbia were protesting. It won't be like that...

The state leadership is not the only one working on the head of the citizens of western Serbia, according to the research of the Podrinje anti-corruption team - PAKT. In the past few years, Rio Tinto has paid 100.5 million dinars to the Faculty of Mining and Geology, of which over one million dinars in donations. From the point of view of the locals in the valley of Jadar and western Serbia, it is disputable that in the case of environmental incidents, this state faculty would perform the expertise. In the last few years, the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering has also appeared on the list of Rio Tinto with 12.05 million; Faculty of Civil Engineering with 10.28; Public Health Institute Belgrade with 13.19 million dinars. All three faculties refuse to submit documentation on the services provided to RT, as well as the Republic Geodetic Authority, which was paid RSD 1,437,112 on several occasions for fees for issuing data, copies of plans and sheets of real estate. In the epilogue, the inhabitants of the Jadra Valley receive collective decisions on the conversion of their agricultural and forest land into construction land. In addition to the fact that in the next period they are not allowed to sow any crops on the "construction" land, the locals also warn that now they expect much higher taxes on these more expensive (construction) plots. In addition to the already mentioned pressures, the company Rio Tinto has hired the law office Delojte Tus, from which they contact citizens about the sale of plots, subtly threatening expropriation if they do not agree to the offered conditions.

For a full 15 years, Rio Tinto has been successfully faking public consultations with citizens, Serbia is working on dismantling its institutions, so we are now in a situation where there is

no one to control the mining giant, stronger than many countries. Serbia currently has five mining inspectors, and judging by the scope of the lithium mine project, it is unlikely that 10 of them would be enough just to control Rio Tinto. Namely, the public still does not know the lifespan of this mine, and its capacity is also unknown, on which the economic justification of exploitation and the assessment of its impact on the environment depend. When it comes to the public interest, the state of Serbia will invest significant funds of citizens in the construction of the part of the road Loznica-Valjevo in the length of 13.4 km and the railway Loznica-Valjevo in the length of about 80 km. This second investment causes slight discomfort, because the construction of the railway, which has started twice so far, has been interrupted by two world wars. Unofficial projections say that Rio Tinto will generate an annual net income of around 152 million euros from the lithium mine. In that case, the level of compensation for the use of mineral resources would amount to around 7.6 million euros a year, provided that the corporation shows real net income and that the state is able to control and collect it. Currently, in Serbia, no one except NIS (3% of net income) pays a fee for the use of mineral resources. So much for the institutions of the system, the ore rent and the public interest. A 15% profit tax collection would amount to € 23 million a year, also provided the company does not show a profit as significantly lower. The “Jadar” project is certainly profitable for the company Rio Tinto, because it will extract about 4 billion euros from Serbia in the first 10 years of work, so it is quite clear whose interest is at stake here - the public is certainly not.

Therefore, the “Jadar” project is certainly not a development project of national interest, because the company can leave the mine at any time without any obligations to rehabilitate the devastated area, which will be much larger than the announced 2,000 hectares.

Residents of the Jadra Valley are asking the state to allow them to produce healthy food, through the necessary manure and afforestation seedlings, which are important in the water management system as a preventive part of the flood protection system.

It is the last moment for us as a society to break free from the grip of high state corruption and realize that the time of shortages of drinking water and agricultural land is coming. Both the citizens of the Jadra Valley and western Serbia lose by building mines. Because that's how someone “upstairs” decided.

Source: pescanik.net