

The reason why people are worried about Rio Tinto's plans to build a large mining basin is that the project is being done without a previous study on the impact on the environment, the founder of the "Let's Protect Jadar and Radjevina" association, Momcilo Alimpic, told Nova ekonomija. Rio Tinto claims that everything is working according to the rules, as well as that a controversial study is underway.

He adds that he lives in the village of Gornje Brezovice, which is part of the Municipality of Krupanj, where the construction of a landfill at almost 450 meters above sea level for "flotation waste and ore tailings" is planned, where, as he claims, hundreds of millions of tons of mining waste. According to him, people are "totally uninformed" about these plans, and he adds that he started the whole story a year ago, because the company "practically came to his doorstep".

"We included experts from the Faculty of Chemistry and Physics in the discussion, there is also a doctor from the 'Batut' Institute. They give us support, as well as people from Spain, Portugal, Mexico, Chile, where they also have problems with Rio Tinto," he says.

"Over twenty villages are indirectly under the influence (of the future project). There were already many problems with the lead smelter in Zajaca near Loznica, there was a lot of damage. The lead melted without filters, without anything," recalls Alimpic, who besides Gornji Brezovica also resides in Loznica. People living in the area fear that ore mining will affect air and water pollution, and Alimpic does not believe that pollution can be prevented by installing filters on plants, because they often talk about it with people from Bor, who have problems with air pollution and who say that "it is of no use." Our interlocutor says that the river Drina is some 10-12 kilometers away and that the construction of a pipeline with a diameter of one meter is planned, through which water from it would be brought and used for the exploitation of lithium.

"Lithium requires a large amount of water. The intention is to wash the jadarite with it and to use concentrated sulfuric or hydrochloric acid in the separation process. The water from the Drina would then be purified and then discharged into Jadar," Alimpic emphasizes.

He notes that, in the event that Jadar is polluted, the rivers Drina, Sava and Danube would also be hit, but that the problem is "that our state does not care about all that".

"We did not invent it, it is stated in their documents, they presented it to us," says the founder of the Association "Let's Protect Jadar and Radjevina".

"The problem is that people are left in the epicenter of the mine, three or four hundred meters from the flotation plant. Two huge crushers are planned there, bigger than in the mines of Kolubara, which will draw 20 megawatts of electricity. Everything has gone too far," said Momcilo Alimpic.

“Our biggest problem is our government. Representatives of our state are silent and work secretly through their people who scare people with some reprisals, job loss, you already know how it is done,” claims Alimpic.

### **The position of The coalition for sustainable mining**

The “Jadar” Project is often the opinion of professional associations of engineers, environmental activists, but also other experts in the field of mining. The Coalition for Sustainable Mining believes that the appearance of heavy metals and chemicals during the separation of the ore will be “so toxic that no reclamation will be possible at that place”. “Let’s say this is an extremely aggressive, extremely dangerous rock formation with over six chemicals, where it is simply illusory to say that some reasonable recultivation is possible,” explains Zvezdan Kalmar from the Coalition for Sustainable Mining for Nova ekonomija, commenting on the company’s intention. on which it intends to rehabilitate the ore landfill. He reminded that a similar practice is applied in Pljevlja in Montenegro, but that it is about ash tailings, which also contains earth. An additional problem is that, as he believes, the mine will be exploited for 30, 40 or 50 years, after which it will be abandoned, while in the vicinity, as he estimates, “devastation will remain”. Kalmar also referred to Rio Tinto’s claim that “there will be no flotation” during ore exploitation.

“It is unfounded to say that there will be no flotation, it actually means a certain type of mixing with certain chemicals to obtain certain processes that then separate certain parts of the ore. In one form or another, a chemical reaction will occur,” said a representative of the Coalition for Sustainable Mining.

Kalmar also emphasizes that the process of water purification is very complicated: “That pool, the purifier, would then have to be several square kilometers large, because these chemical purification reactions do not happen immediately, but last. That amount of water would most likely be enough for an artificial lake. “, Kalmar believes.

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