

Rio Tinto plans to open a lithium mine in Jadar in 2023, which could meet a dozen of the world's needs for the metal used in the electrical industry and the production of batteries for electric vehicles. The mining giant and officials from the Government of Serbia present the project of the "Jadar" mine as an opportunity for the development of western Serbia. Environmental activists, however, believe that the mine would inevitably cause enormous damage to the environment, pollute the soil, disable agriculture and endanger the water supply in a significant part of the territory of Serbia. They draw attention to existing examples of Rio Tinto's harmful actions in other parts of the world.

The Podrinje anti-corruption team - PAKT, which is fighting against the opening of a lithium mine in the Jadar river valley, and BIRODI (Bureau for Social Research) have launched a survey on informing citizens about the project. As PAKT announced in a press release, of the 200 citizens who have completed the survey so far, more than half have heard only negative things about Rio Tinto, and about a fifth mostly negative information. Almost three quarters of the citizens "are convinced that lithium should stay in its place", and that lithium is an ecological mineral that should dig out the thoughts of only 5.91% of respondents. In a similar vein, only 3.76% of respondents believe it is possible to build a mine without environmental consequences, a fifth are unsure, a third think it is impossible and two-fifths are absolutely certain it is impossible. The vast majority of respondents, 88.71%, do not believe the company's promises that the mine will be formed according to the highest environmental standards, and less than four percent of people trust Rio Tinto.

One of the most interesting indicators of the ongoing survey is that a large percentage of citizens support the intention of the locals to conduct a referendum on the mine (88.71%). Most of the citizens who have completed the survey so far are from Belgrade, Loznica, Sabac and other places in western Serbia. About half believe that political parties and institutions should not interfere in this issue, ie that "political interference in citizens' protests will not help resolve the situation", every tenth expects moves from the competent ministry, and even less from the Government of Serbia, the President of the Republic and opposition parties.

The initial results of the survey show that the citizens are largely dissatisfied with the decisions of all former governments to form such a mining plant in the Jadar river valley, without prior consultation with the locals and the interested public, the statement said. According to the Podrinje Anti-Corruption Team, during the preparations for the project, the law of the Republic of Serbia was violated: the conversion of land from agricultural to construction was carried out on the basis of the Spatial Plan for Special Purposes, but inconsistent with the Law on Forests and the Law on Agricultural Land. Spatial plan

The poll shows what Serbian citizens think about the lithium mine in Jadar

incomplete. Representatives of the PAKT believe that during the land conversion, the rules of procedure and erroneously established facts were “grossly violated”, and the citizens filed a complaint with the court against the collective decisions on the conversion, which directly affect about 300 households.

Source: masina.rs