

The people of Smederevo breathe the air of the third category, increased concentrations of harmful substances are an almost daily occurrence.

"The way we work and the investments that the owner currently has and is planning are the answer to your question, and that is why I can freely say that HBIS's interest is not, nor will it ever be, above people's health or lives. It shows business in China, and now here, through the investments and practices they brought ", says Ljubica Drejk, General Manager of the Chinese HBIS in Smederevo and adds: "Ironworks belong to ferrous metallurgy and no one disputes the impact in the overall picture of the state of environmental quality, but there are other factors that we must not ignore, such as traffic, heating, agriculture, other economic entities. When we connect all that with changing weather conditions, it is very difficult or impossible to determine the share of the ironworks. Therefore, our position is to concentrate on solving the problems in the factory and that, in addition to the fact that all measurements on broadcasters are within the legal limits, we should still raise our work to a higher level. Based on the experience of HBIS factories in China, where it was declared the "cleanest ironworks in the world" in Tangshan, our goal is to become among the best in Europe. " When the new investor came, in addition to restoring the production process, the priority was the training of all environmental protection systems, which were neglected in the period when the ironworks was managed by the state. All air quality control filters as well as all other environmental protection systems are operational. For comparison, \$ 80 million was invested in environmental protection and energy saving projects from June 2007 to February 2012, while HBIS invested 140 million from 2017 to mid-2020. When it comes to the effects, the comparative results of production and the amount of pollutants released speak best. The amounts of dust and water discharged per tonne of steel produced are the least ever.

Recently, there was an accident with Turkish siderite ore, due to which the environment was covered with black dust, after which the inspector temporarily banned its use. Is siderite carcinogenic and will it continue to be used in production?

"Siderite is an ore that is imported and all the laws of Serbia and the countries in transit through which the cargo passes are respected during import. This ore is also used by other ironworks in the EU. The use of siderite will be in accordance with the decision of the republic inspector, which allows unloading on the ore yard only in the visible part of the day, with all additional measures to prevent the appearance of dust during manipulation, "Drejk explains.

The surrounding villages are constantly covered with red dust, the Radinac canal and the Ralja river are endangered, and there is a lot of slag from production in the vicinity of the

factory. What are the Chinese doing about these issues?

The projects we have implemented so far are the reconstruction of the couper, the installation of nozzles to the ore depositor, as well as at the overflow sites of the Blast Furnace (VP) backfill plant, the reconstruction of the cooling towers of the VP and Čeličana wastewater treatment plants used in production, asphaltting of roads and installation of dust control systems on them, planting of 650 seedlings in the factory circle according to populated places, installation of three continuous meters on emitters. The implementation of the largest project for environmental protection and energy saving, construction of a new sintering line and a new step furnace that will use blast furnace gas as the base fuel, replacement of converter 2, replacement of transformers with PCB oil, construction of blast furnace gas tanks full utilization of VP gas and another meter on the emitter. Everywhere in the world, slag is used in the construction industry, while in our country, until almost due to legal obstacles and lack of will or ignorance, it is not applied yet. Slag is not classified as waste anywhere in the world. Our law is harmonized with EU laws that cover this area only at the end of 2019, and HBIS submitted all the documentation to register slag as a by-product to the competent authorities in January 2020. We expect slag to replace sand and gravel in the construction industry, " interlocutor explains.

How far has it been with the installation of the new agglomeration and what effects are expected? Is there any truth in the stories that this is a second-hand agglomeration brought from China?

"This is our largest project for environmental protection and energy saving, which is in line with the requirements of RS, but also with the EU and the best available techniques. An environmental impact assessment study was done for this project, which was available for public discussion, but unfortunately, the interest was small. It was an opportunity for everyone to get acquainted with the details of this project, which was not used in the best way, and probably because of that, such doubts and questions arise. The construction of this line is in progress, there was a minor delay due to the pandemic, but at no time did the works stop, "said the interlocutor.

Measuring stations are also a problem. HBIS promised to help strengthen and improve the measurement of air quality in Smederevo and at its own expense hired an authorized house and we organize additional measurements, in addition to those required by law. These reports shall be submitted to the competent authorities.

Environmental protection fee

"All fees for environmental protection, both at the state and local level, have been paid regularly since the decree was passed in 2006. HBIS has paid 6.5 million euros for these

The share of the Chinese ironworks in air pollution in Smederevo, Serbia

purposes from the middle of 2016 until now. In addition to these fees, we regularly pay fees for the use and discharge of wastewater, "says Ljubica Drejk.

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