

At the end of November 2019, the ship “FL Lidya” sailed from Bijela to Ukraine, carrying grit in the amount of almost 4,000 tons, for which “Valgo” previously obtained a permit from the Agency for Nature and Environmental Protection of Montenegro for the export of the so-called “non-dangerous” contaminated grit”. The acceptance of grit from Montenegro was done by the local company “Firma Arka”, with which “Valgo” concluded a special contract, and which is now under investigation by the Ukrainian police due to suspicion that it submitted falsified documents in the process of obtaining permits and thus violated safety environmental procedures in Ukraine. Namely, the results of the Ukrainian laboratory showed that the grit from Montenegro, which was seized in the port of Kherson, is extremely poisonous, as well as that it has a “pronounced mutagenic and carcinogenic effect”.

The data obtained by the MANS Research Center show that the company “Valgo” in the process of obtaining an export permit from the Montenegrin Agency for Nature and Environment submitted for inspection the findings of the Center for Ecotoxicological Testing (CETI), which states that grit is actually originates from the complex “Porto Montenegro” in Tivat, as well as that it is a non-hazardous type of waste, which is different in its characteristics from the toxic grit from Bijela. The document of the Ukrainian laboratory, obtained by MANS in cooperation with colleagues from OCCRP, was forwarded to CETI with a request to interpret the difference between the Montenegrin and Ukrainian findings, as well as to provide an explanation of how it is possible that grit was declared harmless in Montenegro, and in Ukraine for dangerous.

### **Grit from Tivat was transferred to Bijelo in the spring of 2019**

- The material was temporarily stored there on a completely separate and covered plot, until the moment of transport by the company “Valgo” by sea, together with other waste from the Shipyard Bijela, to the appropriate final destination, ie licensed landfill “, stated the company” Adriatic Marinas”.

On the other hand, even after several inquiries from the Research Center of the NGO MANS and the Regional Network for the Investigation of Organized Crime and Corruption (OCCRP), Valgo did not provide answers regarding how toxic waste from Montenegro reached Ukraine.

The Environmental Protection Agency, which issued a permit for the export of grit, which turned out to be toxic, told MANS that they knew about the investigation in Ukraine, and that they respected the international documents that regulate this area.

- The contract between Valgo Montenegro and VK Firma Arka is an integral part of the

notification for the export of non-hazardous waste in accordance with the Law on Ratification of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal submitted by Valgo Montenegro. In accordance with the said law, the Agency forwarded the notification to the competent authority of Ukraine. " The Ministry of Ecology, Spatial Planning and Urbanism (former Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism - MORT) responds that they are familiar with the current investigation in Ukraine, as well as that they have communication with the Ukrainian Ministry of Energy and Environmental Protection.

- "Due to the impossibility of permanent disposal of this waste in Montenegro, exports were started, so it is quite clear that returning waste to Montenegro is not the most favorable solution, noting that even after the eventual return of waste, the exporter from Montenegro has an obligation to find another destination." Montenegro will use all legal mechanisms to bear the burden of the costs of eventual return to the exporter from Montenegro. "

Until then, grit, which still remains unclear whether it originated exclusively from Tivat or was mixed with grit from Bijela and thus exported, remains "trapped" in a Ukrainian port, while Montenegro faces a major international environmental scandal.

### **Grit from Porto Montenegro**

Grit in the complex "Porto Montenegro" was created during the former Naval Technical Repair Institute "Sava Kovacevic", also known as "Arsenal Tivat", and the company "Adriatic Marinas" - which manages the luxury complex, since 2010 has repeatedly broke the deadline for the removal of grit, for which they were punished by the environmental inspection.

The environmental impact assessment study prepared for the needs of the premises of the "Porto Montenegro" complex from 2010 foresaw that "Adriatic Marinas" would remove all temporarily stored quantities of waste grit and contaminated land by the end of 2011.

However, the Department for Environmental Inspection of the Directorate for Inspection Affairs twice submitted requests to initiate misdemeanor proceedings against the company precisely because of the violation of these deadlines, in March 2013 and May 2015.

In the first case, "Adriatic Marinas" was fined 1,000 euros, while the second misdemeanor procedure was suspended because the deadline for the removal of grit was extended until the end of 2017, then until the end of 2018, and finally Tivat grit was transferred to Bijela in March 2019.

Source: mans.co.me