

Local environmentalist group March from Kolubara won a temporary ban at the Basic Court in Valjevo on exploration works by company Euro Lithium Balkan in the Valjevo-Mionica basin.

The ban will be in force until the end of the procedure, which the movement initiated at the Ministry of Mining and Energy of Serbia.

The legal representative of the movement Sreten Đorđević told N1 it is important news and argued a matrix has been established to fight with legal means. "We have joined the procedure before the Ministry of Mining and Energy in which we are asking for the licenses of the company Euro Lithium Balkan not to be renewed. And we have provided evidence for that," he said.

Euro Lithium Balkan's research license expired on October 31. The March from Kolubara (Marš sa Kolubare) movement pointed to large amounts of hazardous and polluting substances in the water caused by exploration activities of the subsidiary of Canadian company Euro Lithium and Borates.

Namely, the water samples were taken from leaking wells 4 and 22 in the hamlet of Šušeočka and the village of Lukavac near the city of Valjevo in the west of the country. The analysis showed high concentrations of boron, sodium, and iron. The water was also polluted in the artesian well of the Arbajter family, where the concentration of boron was found to be two and a half times higher than allowed.

"Drilling causes the mixing of water from the depths with surface waters, which is dangerous for the supply of Valjevo itself," said Đorđević. The water analysis was performed by the Institute of Chemistry, Technology and Metallurgy of the University of Belgrade.

Next permit to expire in February

The temporary ban ruling is for one of the three fields in the Valjevo-Mionica basin for which the company received permits from the Ministry of Mining and Energy. The next permit expires in February and the movement is working to gather evidence, Đorđević revealed. He says the activists had evidence for the field for which the ban was imposed and that they would make efforts for the remaining area.

"The ultimate goal is to suspend the project because the damage has already occurred here. The Valjevo basin with 49 wells is a most endangered point after Nedeljice," said Đorđević. The lawyer expressed the expectation that the ministry would initiate a procedure and include the people he represents.

While many people in Serbia are on the streets, blocking roads and opposing exploration and possible exploitation of lithium in the Jadar valley and elsewhere, the March from Kolubara movement is showing progress can be achieved by legal means. The group coordinates villagers who are endangered by mining exploration and are united around the idea of protecting their estates, health and property rights.

Source: balkangreenenergynews.com