

Macedonia mining: Experts against copper mine Valandovo

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Recently conducted geological research in the area of Kazandol village, in the municipality of Valandovo in Macedonia, has shown the presence of copper ore. The investor who wants to exploit this ore Sardich MC DOOEL, also wants to open a smelting plant for processing ore into copper cathode.

The total area for the processing plant and the mine is on 283,461 hectares. For that purpose it is necessary to change the state land appropriation from G category - production, distribution and service, into D1 category - heavy and polluting industry.

Ore deposit is located at only few hundred meters from the Kazandol village and it is about one kilometer aerial distance from Valandovo.

The inevitable consequences of exploitation and processing of ore:

- Air pollution - in addition to dust resulting from the crushing of rocks, emissions, such as CO₂ and SO₂ would appear during the smelting process, as well as due to the increased presence of machines and transport vehicles.
- The smelting process requires huge amount of water. Few years ago, the village beside the mine did not have drinking water and this problem has been solved by artesian well. Although the artesian well would be dug for pumping water, the lack of water in the region, especially in summer when it is necessary to irrigate farmland, would cause major problems for agriculture, but also for the production itself. Another potential problem might be the discharge of used water from the production, which would be an environmental disaster for the river and wildlife. Although the draft plan states that water is discharged into the artificial pool, and in this case there is a possibility that wild animals might drink it and could be poisoned. Discharge of water would lead to pollution of land, which would mean that there will be no conditions for organic farming of plants, which this area is famous for.
- Valandovo is an area characterized by seismic activity. There are several neotectonic faults in the valley, and thus there is a possibility of a greater disaster in case of any seismic movement.
- The noise represents a major issue in the process of extracting and crushing of ore, which is

particularly problematic due to the proximity of settlement.

- Large amounts of industrial waste would appear in the processing of ore, and it would have to be disposed somewhere. Tailings itself would contribute to pollution of land, surface and ground water.

Valandovo Municipality never needed heavy and polluting industry. Turning to this type of industry is neither in the interest of the citizens of Valandovo, nor in the interest of the State.