

The tailings disposal site of the underground Jadar mine will reportedly be between the rivers of Jadar and Korenita, which sometimes flood the surrounding area, so locals suspect that the hazardous waste could reach the Drina and then the Sava and Danube. The Center for Environment from Banja Luka asked for the initiation of a procedure in BiH to determine the transboundary impact of the possible exploitation and processing of lithium ore in Loznica area across the border, environmentalists from Serbia said. Rio Tinto will decide in a year whether to mine the jadarite mineral.

Rio Tinto, one of the biggest mining conglomerates on the planet, has been studying a lithium deposit near Loznica for the last 16 years and purchasing land. The Anglo-Australian company plans to decide in a year whether to go through with the project with an estimated worth of USD 1.5 billion. The site is close to the Drina, and BiH territory is just across the river.

Environmentalist groups called Zaštitimo Jadar i Rađevinu and Koalicija za održivo rudarenje u Srbiji (coalition for sustainable mining in Serbia) thanked the Center for Environment - CZŽS for, as they said, alerting competent authorities in the Republic of Srpska and Bosnia Herzegovina about the possible transboundary impact of jadarite exploitation in Serbia.

CZŽS is based in Banja Luka, the capital city of the Republic of Srpska in BiH. Citing the Espoo Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in a Transboundary Context, the organization demanded from the state to initiate consultations with Serbia on the spatial plan for the special purpose area for the mining and processing of the aforementioned ore, the two other environmentalist groups said. They asserted the colleagues from Banja Luka wrote that Rio Tinto was one of the most notorious international corporations and that it has prompted scandals all over the world, from Madagascar to Indonesia to Papua New Guinea. "We believe we must take a responsible stance toward this project, which works with a very specific and unique mineral, jadarite, which is indeed a pioneering and risky project, especially when, like in this case, we don't have enough information about the impact," the submitted document reads, as quoted by Zaštitimo Jadar i Rađevinu and Koalicija za održivo rudarenje.

States that signed the Espoo Convention must consult the authorities and public in other countries about the possibility of a transboundary environmental impact. The statement adds that the project for the construction of a new unit in the Kostolac B thermal power plant and the expansion of the Drmno coal open cast mine had to be restarted from scratch because Serbia didn't meet the terms from the convention.

"Considering that the spatial plan for the special purpose of jadarite exploitation was adopted and produced at the end of last year, during holidays, so that the public wouldn't gain awareness, we have the reason to believe that transboundary consultations weren't conducted and that this plan will have to fail," the two organizations from Serbia said,

claiming that Jadar project is a plan for “environmental suicide.” They proposed to include Croatia in the process due to the proximity of the river Sava.

“We are also pushing to determine whether transboundary consultations were held in other disputed cases, like gold mining in Serbia’s east, as not even the domestic laws are implemented with regard to our compatriots in Bor and the surrounding villages, let alone international conventions,” according to the statement.

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