

After the Chinese company JCXKC announced a gold exploration at a new location in Serbia a few days ago, the question was raised again: How many more mines and hidden precious metals are located in our country? At the beginning of May, Chinese company has signed a contract worth 33,5 million euros for exploitation of gold and copper mine at Cukaru Peki location, near Bor, and it is estimated that there are around million tonnes of copper.

Having in mind a number of locations, an abundance of ores (50 kinds even) and the fact that there are 200 locations in Serbia being explored for mineral raw materials, the experts estimated that the mining in Serbia could be the main asset of our economy. As they stated, Serbia has an abundance of metal and other ores; the most widely spread are copper, gold, lead, zinc, iron, chrome, manganese, molybdenum, cobalt, cadmium and antimony. The biggest attention deserves Bor, where, according to the assessment of Canadian company "Nevsun", around 15 million tonnes of copper and 370 tonnes of gold are located, so the value of this location is estimated to be around 100 billion dollars.

Predrag Mijatovic, the deputy director of Geological Centre of Serbia says that the largest number of sites is in eastern Serbia in the outskirts of Bor, although explorations are done all over the Serbian territory. "At the moment there are more than 200 locations where the raw mineral materials are being explored adding to that the sites that have already been exploited. We are richest in copper, lead, zinc, as well as in coal, mostly lignite. Of other raw materials, we have clay and the construction stone for the roads" said Mijatovic and adds that the most of the findings were discovered by Serbian geologists (except for lithium findings) and foreign companies that are present in Serbia at the moment confirmed those data and expanded researches with additional investments.

Professor of Faculty of Mining and Geology in Belgrade, Rade Jelenkovic, says that there are 48 to 50 various kinds of ores and around 5,000 sites.

"The most numerous are copper and gold ores in eastern Serbia, from Majdanpek to Bor. Gold is located near Zagubica, Blagojev Kamen and in the riverbeds of Pek and Timok. One of the gold mines is located on Radan mountain, Lece", says he.

He reminds us that there are zinc and lead deposits on Avala, from Belgrade towards Kosmaj and Rudnik, on Kopaonik Mountain, in Raska...Antimony is situated in western Serbia, near Zajaca, and there are findings rich in coal, especially lignite. Gas and oil deposits are found in Vojvodina.

Three ore sites at Crni vrh near Zagubica contain 72 tonnes of gold. Silver deposits in Serbia are found in the Carpathian area, in Bor, Krivelja, Majdanpek, Timok, Blagojev Kamen, Pek, as well as in Sumadija on Rudnik Mountain. Platinum deposits in Serbia are in Pomoravlje near Vrnjačka Banja and Trstenik.

Vladimir Simic, professor at the same faculty says that precious metals are always interesting for exploitation and that gold and silver will be popular as long as it's dictated by their stock market price. He mentioned that Serbia doesn't have separated gold mines but

that the certain percentage of gold is always found in copper deposits.

“Existing deposits have the potential for at least 15 to 20 years of exploitation although in geological sense it is a small period. In this area the companies are usually counting on at least 50 years because they invest a lot of resources in researches”, Simic points out and adds that there is a huge potential of jadarite, recently discovered in Serbia, which exploitation could start in 2023.

One of the world’s biggest deposits of this mineral from which the lithium is segregated is located near Loznica. Ore reserves in Jadar mine are estimated at 136 million tonnes. It is considered that findings of jadarite ore are situated on 20 more locations extending to Zajecar and that at these places exploration results are even more impressive.

Quicksilver, arsenic and graphite are not explored enough ...

Professor Rade Jelenkovic states in one of his papers on mineral wealth of Serbia that the mineral resources are of primary economic importance in Serbia. Having in mind the amount of reserves and mineral potential, he claims that it is a realistic assumption that these resources will be strategically important in the following decades; copper, lead, zinc, gold and silver but also a construction materials resources, magnesite, refractory and ceramics clay as well as quartz raw materials.

Serbia also has resources of secondary economic importance that are of lower potential; molybdenum, antimony, nickel, tin, uranium, bauxite, iron, manganese, tungsten and some rare elements. Mineral resources of tertiary economic importance have not been sufficiently explored, and these are: quicksilver, arsenic, platinum group of elements, asbestos, graphite, phosphates, chalk, talc, piezo-optical quartz and sepiolitic clays.

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