Senior geologist at the German Mineral Resources Agency (DERA) Michael Schmidt said that more than 15 **lithium mining projects** are currently in various stages of development in Europe. He specified for Demostat that the projects are located in Spain, Portugal, Finland, France, Austria, Germany, the Czech Republic, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and other countries.

According to Demostat, the goal of the EU is clear – it is necessary to reduce Europe's dependence on China when it comes to the key **raw material for batteries**. In order to achieve this, Europe must also exploit its own lithium deposits, which are found in several countries. The candidates are, among others, Germany, the Czech Republic, France, Portugal, but the EU is also counting on Serbia, writes Demostat.

Europe has the potential to extract and process part of the necessary lithium, but, according to Demostat, the EU is aware that, in order for this to happen, it is necessary to overcome obstacles, primarily the protests of the local population and long project approval procedures, but also to meet high environmental standards .

Schmidt stated that Europe has the potential to significantly supply itself with lithium from its deposits in 2030 – up to 40 percent of the assumed demand.

When it comes to Germany, Schmidt said that he sees the greatest potential for lithium mining in **hard rock deposits** on the border between that country and the Czech Republic, in the Ore Mountains area, as well as in the Upper Rhine Valley, where lithium is found in salt water.

He said that, due to many unknown aspects, it is difficult to talk about the year when lithium exploitation could start in Germany. Speaking about Serbia, Schmidt said that it has unique and large deposits of lithium and boron. He added that the Jadar project, which he said was previously developed by Rio Tinto, is among the largest hard rock deposits in Europe.

"This project and the products generated there could be essential for the European supply scheme regarding independence from China," Schmidt said.

He added that the project could encourage the development of the processing industry in the wider area around the site. "This also applies to the Euro lithium project near Valjevo," he said. Asked if there is an environmentally friendly way to mine lithium, Schmidt said there are many ways to implement **sustainable mining** and mining operations. It is, as he stated, a "mega-trend" when it comes to many projects and locations where raw materials are exploited around the world. He added that, regulatory frameworks and mining standards are being established.

He said that "lithium is needed for the green transition", and, as he stated, it is therefore essential that the mining of these materials be as sustainable as possible. "This is demanded by customers as well as industry. Environmental and social licensing is becoming more and more important," he pointed out. He added that it must be understood that mining will always have an impact on the environment. "Therefore, there must be strict regulatory and

environmental frameworks to ensure this," Schmidt pointed out. When asked when we can expect environmentally friendly exploitation of lithium, Schmidt said that the process has started and will be implemented more and more. "It will be an obligation for governments, for downstream industries, as well as for end customers," said Schmidt.