

Exclusively foreign multinational companies will be engaged in mining in Serbia. In two years foreign companies invested 95 million dollars in exploration.

Serbia lies on about two million tons of lead and zinc, several million tons of copper, 20 tons of gold and four billion tons of coal, and almost all of the ore, except coal, will be excavated in the coming years mainly by private companies. If in the next ten years, five new mines open, as planned, our country would be expected to get five billion dollars of foreign investment and about 1,000 new jobs.

Multinational corporations like the US "Freeport", junior mining developer Canadian "Reservoir Minerals" and the British-Australian "Rio Tinto" invested about 95 million dollars in geological research in Serbia over the last two years. Geological investment would rise several times if our country knew exactly how much ore resource it has at its disposal. Dundee precious metals is also active in Serbia thru its Avala Resources junior mining company. British company Mineco operates its lead zinc mines quite successfully for several years showing that mining exploitation is feasible and profitable in Serbia.

- Estimates on the resources and reserves of gold, copper, lead and zinc in Serbia are known only to the Ministry of Mining and Energy, and are in the domain of trade secrets - explains geologist Predrag Mijatovic from the Geological Institute of Serbia. - Geological Institute of Serbia did the last detailed analysis of mineral reserves in Serbia in 2000 for the needs of the Federal Government. When it comes to lead and zinc, all mines in Serbia are almost entirely privately owned, mostly by foreigners.

Mines in which there is an active exploitation of lead and zinc are "Veliki Majdan" near Ljubovija, "Rudnik" near Gornji Milanovac, "Grot" near Vranje and "Lece" near Medveđa. In each of these mines there are several hundred thousand tons of ore reserves. As the accompanying minerals, which have a very high value on the market, there are gold and silver. The mines "Rudnik" and "Veliki Majdan" have significant quantities of silver, and there are gold and silver at "Lece", which has great potential. However, biggest gold mine is "Bor", which is owned by state. Rudnik mine is owned by UK firm Mineco and it was promoted as the biggest success case of mine privatization in Serbia. Mineco also operates lead zinc mines in neighboring Bosnia.

While it may seem it would be best for our country to mine the ore itself and to keep the largest share for itself, in reality it is not so.

- All over the world, except perhaps in China and North Korea, exploitation of mineral resources is handled by private companies while a leading role is played by the multinational mining companies. The process from the start of geological exploration to the first phase of exploitation lasts between 10 and 15 years - says Mijatović. - The companies have to take risks, because at the beginning of geological research, which are not cheap, they do not know whether they will end up finding deposits. Until now, all foreign and domestic companies relied in the early stages of research on the data obtained during the

period when state and state-owned enterprises financed basic and applied geological research, and that is the period from 1945 to the present.

Serbia has reserves of copper for the next 25 years, while there is coal for almost a century, says Professor Dr. Rade Jelenković, head of the Department of Economic Geology at the University of Belgrade and a full member of the Academy of Engineering Sciences of Serbia.

- The mineral wealth of Serbia is not used to the extent that it is really possible - said Jelenković. - The main problems are the lack of financial resources for geological research, insufficient manufacturing industry and the relatively small number of companies with a staff that is able to respond to all the tasks. So we need to include more rich foreign companies. They have invested more than \$ 300 million in the last ten years in geological exploration of metallic and non-metallic minerals, excluding oil and gas and employed about 700 local workers. From unskilled to highly educated.

According to official data, in Serbia there are about 350 mining companies and about 20 enterprises engaged in exploration of mineral raw materials, from clay to gold. However, the quality of raw materials are still being examined.

The best-known copper deposits already in exploitation, with predominantly low metal content and significant resources are located in eastern Serbia in Majdanpek, Bor and Veliki Krivelj, a lead-zinc ore at the Mine "Lece", "Veliki Majdan", "Groto" and "Belo brdo". There are significant reserves of lead and zinc in "Stari trg" and "Kiževku" in Kosovo. Most deposits of gold and silver are in RTB "Bor".

There are known reserves of metals such as tin, manganese, molybdenum, titanium, vanadium and uranium, which are not exploited because they are small. Potentially significant resources of nickel and cobalt are in the region of Mokra gora, Čikatovo and Glavice, but experts point out that their reserves are not explored. There are potential deposits of antimony in the region of Zajača, Kopaonik and Bujanovac massif, while aluminum occurs in western Serbia.

Richest in coal

When the amount of mineral resources is measured in relation to the territory, Serbia has reserves of gold, silver, copper, lead and zinc above the world average. Within the limits below the world average are the resources and reserves of tungsten, tin, iron and chromium.

Compared to the percentage of the world population, a group of Serbian mineral resources at a level below the world average is joined by the manganese, mercury, fluorite, barite, gypsum and other raw materials. Similar situation is in terms of resources and reserves of oil, gas and oil shale. However, deposits of coal, especially coal, in relation to the amount of these reserves in the world, puts Serbia into a place far above the world average.

Oil and gas

Resources of oil and gas are located largely in the Pannonia basin in Serbia, in the area of

Banat depression. Oil production in Serbia settles from 20 to 30 percent of domestic demand for this fuel.

Natural reservoirs in Serbia have reserves of around 14 million tons of oil and gas, but it is estimated that our soil is situated on four times more black gold. Oil reserves are rising every year, as well as annual production.

According to the list of "World fact Book" from 2013, Serbia is on the 74th place according to the proven oil reserves, transmits Serbia-energy.eu