

Starting in June 2022, [Rio Tinto](#) bought land worth at least 1.2 million euros in the vicinity of Loznica, despite the fact that the Government of Serbia suspended the company’s [lithium mining project “Jadar”](#), **the Balkan Research Network (BIRN) announced.**

BIRN also obtained a document from the company’s meeting with the Delegation of the [European Union](#), in which, among other things, it is stated that Rio Tinto looks favorably on the local, and fears a potential national referendum on the “Jadar” project that was supposed to be carried out. in the vicinity of Loznica.

After a series of protests by environmental activists across the country and blockades of bridges and roads, the Government of Serbia, led by Ana Brnabić, stopped the “Jadar” project on January 20 last year and canceled all documents with the company Rio Tinto. However, part of the public was not convinced that the project was completely suspended, but pointed out that it was only “frozen” until more favorable socio-political circumstances, reports Beta.

BIRN research shows that the mining corporation has definitely not “put an end” to the project. Only from June 2022 until today, the company has purchased at least 5.78 hectares of land in the vicinity of Loznica.

By cross-checking data from the **Republic Geodetic Institute**, BIRN found that Rio Tinto signed at least seven sales contracts with land owners in the villages of Gornje Nedeljica and Slatina - the first in June 2022 and the last in January 2023 - paying a total of more than 1.2 million euros.

The smallest contract is worth 15,000 euros, which is what Rio Sava, the Serbian subsidiary of the mining giant, paid for property on 457 square meters in Slatina, and the largest is 430,000 euros - what the company paid for almost 5,000 square meters, also in the municipality of Loznica.

Rio Tinto does not hide its desire to “revive” the project. Rio Tinto Ltd CEO Jacob Stausholm (Jakob Stausholm) said at a briefing for investors in Sydney in December last year that “Jadar” represents “unbelievable value”.

“We have to figure out how to do it. The only thing I would say today is that we didn’t give up,” Reuters reported his statement.

In a reply to BIRN, Rio Tinto points out that “the purchase of land is a continuation of previously assumed obligations of the **Rio Sava** company that refer to the period before the [Government of Serbia](#) in January 2022 invalidated the acts for the implementation of the project”.

Rio Tinto did not answer the additional question about what kind of “previously assumed obligations” are we talking about, considering that the contracts were certified months after the decision of the Government of Serbia, and the last two almost a year after the suspension of the project.

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