

The expansion of mining activities in Serbia is currently increasing. Exploitation of copper, lead, zinc, silver and gold is widely spread.

Experts in the field point out that it is important that, in parallel with the opening of the mines, a supporting industry is developed to maximize the benefits of the raw material itself, and that it is noticeable that far greater attention is being paid to environmental protection in the mining sector than it was the case earlier.

Miroslav Ignjatovic of the Association for Energy and Mining of the Serbian Chamber of Commerce tells Tanjug that there are 200 exploitation and 127 exploration fields in Serbia, where extensive research is being done.

Canadian discovery at the border

The latest news that has emerged these days is that Canadian research firm Medgold risorsiz confirmed results of rich ore deposits.

They previously indicated that they found excellent indicators in southern Serbia at the border with Bulgaria and Macedonia that rich deposits of precious metals are in the area. The company said they found about seven million tonnes of ore, with about 680,000 ounces, or 19.3 tonnes of gold, worth just over \$ 1 billion in just one project site called "Tlamino", and investigations continue.

Ignjatovic points out that this news is an encouragement for the development of the mining sector in Serbia, but it will depend on further geological testing whether there are realistic conditions for a more serious mining project. He states that a clearer picture of the prospect of the reservoir itself will be obtained in the coming period, and points out that it is noticeable that far more attention is paid to environmental protection in the mining sector this year.

"The Mining Waste Cadastre project, which lasted for three years, provided Serbia with a clear picture of this waste, which is the basis for analyzing the environmental situation and planning further steps to address the issue of this waste," said Ignjatović.

Also, in terms of investment, Ignjatovic says that in the next three years, the highest level of investment is expected in the Chukaru Peki mine, the Jadar project, as well as investments in the Bor pits now owned by Zidjin company.

"We should not forget the development of surface mines in the branch of RB Kolubara, which in the coming period will represent the basis for a stable electric power system of Serbia and the production of energy from thermal capacities," he added.

Otherwise, it is estimated that about two percent of Serbia's GDP belongs to the mining sector. By structure, about 90 percent of the estimated two percent of GDP is made up of energy minerals, coal, oil and natural gas, as well as copper as a metallic mineral resource. The rest of the structure is made from lead and zinc and non-metallic minerals, mainly stone

aggregate, sand and gravel and raw materials for the cement industry.

A bright future

Experts at the Geological Survey of Serbia state that the future of this branch in Serbia is certainly bright. Geologist Predrag Mijatovic tells Tanjug that significant investments are still needed.

“Investing in metallic raw materials research is very time consuming and it is not a process that can be completed in a year or two, it takes seven to 10 years”, Mijatovic pointed out. As for how Serbian ore is stationed by region, eastern Serbia is dominated by copper and gold, and sometimes lead and zinc. There are also uranium deposits on Stara Planina. In central Serbia, deposits of lead, zinc, uranium, as well as gold and silver are characteristic, according to Mijatovic.

In the western part of Serbia, in the Podrinje region, there are many deposits of antimony that are no longer exploited, and there are also lead and zinc, according to the Geological Survey. Nickel and chromium are found in several places in Serbia, especially in the central part, near Arandjelovac, Vrnjacka Banja, in the west in Mokra Gora, while chromium is found in Tara, Zlatibor, Deli Jovan, and bauxite (raw material for aluminum) in Tara, Zlatibor, near Pocuta and near Babusnica.

There are also deposits of non-metals as well as coal, and in Vojvodina there are deposits of gas and oil, as well as deposits of different types of clay.

In terms of reserves, the overall resources and reserves of lead and zinc, including the mines in Kosovo and Metohija, are estimated at close to 100 million tons and coal deposits at about ten billion tons, says Mijatovic. There are less reserves of brown coal, which is exploited underground, while, for example, gold reserves cannot be estimated accurately, but it is assumed to be around a few tens of tons of gold as a metal but outside the Bor deposits. Copper resources are estimated at several billion tons, both proven ore reserves and resources under exploration.

Experts at the Geological Survey of Serbia cite an example that the Trepča mine is at half the value of the estimated ore, or half of the balance reserves according to the exploitation trend. The Kosovo Basin is, as they say at the Institute, so rich in coal (lignite) that it could contribute to the smooth production of electricity over the next 150 years.

Otherwise, Serbia imports iron ore as well as higher quality coal (brown) for heating and industrial consumption (coal).

Source: b92.net