

If it weren't for the ancient mining, which taught us modern technologies, there would not be a world of technology today. If, God forbid, we kamarats would stop working, the world would return to its earlier, civilizational or non-civilizational times. Paleolithic, Neolithic ...? We, the miners, in the womb of Mount Rudnik, face the historical epochs of our predecessors and the latest, contemporary challenges. But our bread, symbolically called the nine-crust bread for centuries due to the hardships and dangers of our business, has far fewer crusts here. The miners of the Rudnik Company and the Rudnik Flotation, on the mountain of the same name, on the roof of Sumadija, above Gornji Milanovac, spoke to "Novosti".

It is just 15 years since the privatization of that lead and zinc mine, one of the most significant for Serbia and Europe, by sale to the Belgrade-based company Kontango. Economic privatization experts rank this privatization among the top ten, the most successful in Serbia. Some say among the top five ...

- The privatization of the mines in 2004 is truly one of the best, most straight in Serbia - the camaraderie and their families by surnames Jakovljevic, Krnjajic, Markovic, Ilic, Ciric, Blagojevic, Ivanovic assure us. From 1992. until selling "Rudnik" was on the verge of abyss. Miners were killed, our cameramen were injured ...

After privatization, wages, security of life, mining and ore processing were many times higher, there were no layoffs, and many more workers were employed. "The lead and zinc mine", as it used to be called, has been Serbia's most important underground site for these metals for centuries, and in 2004 it became the first privately owned underground mine in Serbia after World War II.

And, one of the few privatized companies in Serbia where profit is reinvested in its development, instead of extracting money from it.

This is also one of the few companies that regularly brings together the families of all its workers. During the official commemorative dates, but also miners' Day. At one time, their breadwinners went into the pit of danger, and now they go to the pit of faith in existence and security.

We dug 400,000 tons of ore before, and this year, within three months, we fulfilled the plan. There are currently one million tons of reserves, in a decade of digging. Earlier we spent two million euros to explore new ore deposits and drilled 45 kilometers of wells. In half this year, we have drilled 20 kilometers, by December we will drill 40, and then for a while we will not drill, although we can. In the depths of the mountain there are reserves for future generations, the future of the mine is secured. Now there are 462 employees, most of them young miners - explains Aco Ilic, general manager of "Rudnik".

### **The North Macedonians work as well**

More than 400 meters below the entrance and the inscription "Good Luck", the ore is being mined by North Macedonians. They have been here for about two decades since the

"Kratovo" and "Zletovo" mines in their country were shut down - says Aco Ilic. - At the beginning of this year, there were 70 of them working here, and 18 remained, because the mines in North Macedonia are open again. With 10 or 15 years of service here, they can get a Serbian pension money.

#### **The best miners get up to 1000 euros per month**

The best miners earn a thousand euros a month, the average salary is 65,000 RSD net, or 115,000 gross. For Miners' Day, checks were shared at RSD 120,000 each. They are Slobodan Ciric, Miroslav Ilic and Predrag Blagojevic. This is a dangerous job. There used to be more than 30 injuries a year, unfortunately, with fatalities, and this year there were only five of minor injuries - says Aco Ilic.

#### **The Poles**

Two engineers from the Polish company "Carbon" are also working hard for the Mine. They are Pavel Carnacki and Grzegorz Miklas. The company is making a kilometer long tunnel, aiming to reach the GP ore body that was discovered last year, and has about one million tons of quality ore.

#### **The longest years of service**

Miner Milorad Ivanovic has been working here for the longest time - 40 years, while for 30 years of work, the director Ilic, Ljiljana Obrenovic, Milutin Popovic, Desimir Radojicic and Aleksandar Mihajlovic have been awarded.

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