Zijin Mining – environmental progress at the Chukaru Peki Mine in Serbia

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An environmental impact study of the Chukaru Peki gold and copper mine owned by China's Zijin Mining Group was presented to the citizens of Bor.

"I was born in Bor and as mining expert who worked at the RTB Bor mine for forty-two years and was closely related to underground mining for all that period, it was my duty to tell my fellow citizens what I thought of this project and what I officially informed and the line Ministry of Environment. Finally, as a Member of Parliament who has received the support of fellow citizens, it is my duty to represent the interests of this area. " to the excavation method, which was adopted.

Instead of the previously foreseen method of surface mining, the Chinese owner adopted the method (two variants) of the ore with the preservation of the surface of the terrain above the mine. This is a crucial strategic decision, both for the future development of the mine and for the local and wider community.

"The large-scale degradation of the surface area and the creation of irreparable and irreparable damage to the mine environment have been avoided. With such a decision, in an ecological sense, the project in the field of mining with irreparable damage was translated into the field of mining with damages that can be reduced and significantly repaired. Doing so opens the door wide to align interests and build a harmonious relationship between mine owners – the Chinese company Zijin Mining Group, the local community and the state. ", emphasizes Dr B.Mihajlovic

Compensate for damage to the local population

Since the change of the concept of excavation and adoption of the method with the preservation of the surface of the terrain, the greatest benefit will be given to the local population of the three villages (Brerstovac, Slatina and Metovnica) in whose area the mine will be built. It is well known that the population in these villages is rapidly decreasing from year to year.

Careless, reckless construction of the mine, regardless of the environmental consequences for the local population, as was the case with the previous concept of excavation with surface destruction, but already obvious negative processes would quickly accelerate. That, simply, should not have been allowed. And therefore, the decision to excavate while preserving the surface was welcomed.

The study addressed all potential adverse impacts well and provided solutions for their elimination, mitigation and reduction. It is very realistic that all these measures, with good organization and cooperation of mines with the local population, can be realized. If this is achieved, the harmony of the relationship will be established, which is quite sure, a long-term interest of both parties. Particular attention should be paid to watercourses and the hydrological situation in the field. Then, to compensate for the obvious damage that hunters, beekeepers, vegetable growers and livestock farmers will suffer from possible drying of wells, etc. Remedying these consequences is a small and costly expense for the company, but it is crucial for the locals because “When a mouse steps on an elephant, it does not feel it, but when an elephant steps on a mouse, it hurts a lot.”

Locals should also be an absolute priority when hiring. With a measured and well-planned employment policy, the degressive trends of the local population could be stopped and even reversed. This would be the biggest success in the social component of the project and should be pursued.

Another significant advantage mentioned in the study is the use of flotation tailings for backfilling excavated areas in the mine. In this way, the amount of flotation tailings that will be deposited on the surface of the terrain will be reduced to only 30% of the total amount (the previous concept was that 100% of the tailings were deposited on the surface), while the remaining 70% will be returned to the mine and thus preserved. surface of the terrain. This achieves a double ecological effect – and protects the terrain surface from being clogged and reduces surface degradation in the tailings disposal area.

The presence of arsenic in the concentrate and the risk of its processing in the Bor Metallurgical Complex

The study also has one significant negative environmental component, which can easily (and should) be avoided: it envisages processing of part of the produced concentrate in the Bor metallurgical complex, which can cause unintended environmental consequences.

World experience gained from the processing of copper ore with an increased amount of arsenic indicates that the amount of arsenic in the concentrate increases by up to ten times during flotation processing. Therefore, efforts should be made to reduce the concentration of arsenic in environmentally friendly frames in the ore processing process.

“I also suggest that during the planned expansion of metallurgical capacities, one part should be enabled for environmentally friendly processing of concentrates with increased arsenic content. Because of the extreme importance to the wider community, I believe that this concept should be made known to the public.”, concludes Dr B.Mihajlovic.

Source: novaekonomija.rs