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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee
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**Possible negative impact of mining activities in Trstionica
– Gornja Bukovica and Vareš (Bosnia & Herzegovina)**

- GOVERNMENT REPORT -

Document prepared by the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina

PROGRESS REPORT (02)

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity
Bern Convention
Council of Europe
Avenue de l'Europe
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Attn.

Ms. Alessandra Siino, Secretary of the Bern Convention
Ms. Marta **Međlińska**, Programme Manager

Reference: New complaint: 2022/7: Possible negative impact of mining activities in Trstionica – Gornja Bukovica and Vareš (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Updated report, hereby delivered

Consolidated report prepared by Dejan Radosevic, Bern Convention National Focal Point for Bosnia and Herzegovina

Banja Luka, 4th December 2025

We hereby point out that procedures are currently pending before B&H authorities in relation to the settlement of the dispute in this matter. Certain proceedings have been initiated before courts and other competent state bodies in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as listed below:

1. On 21 November 2024, the claimant, the Foundation "Atelier for Social Changes – AKT", filed a lawsuit against the Decision of the Federal Ministry of Environment and Tourism (FMOIT), No. UPI 05/2-23-11-195/19-3 dated 21 October 2024, which amended and supplemented the environmental permit issued to the investor "ADRIATIC METALS BH" d.o.o. Vareš for the Project of reconstruction of facilities for the exploitation and processing of lead, zinc and barite ore at the site Veovača I – Tisovci – Veovača II, Municipality of Vareš.
2. On 18 July 2025, the claimant, the Foundation "Atelier for Social Changes – AKT", filed a lawsuit against the Decision of the FMOIT, No. UP-I 05/2-02-19-5-8/25 dated 9 June 2025, issued to the investor "ADRIATIC METALS BH" d.o.o. Vareš for processing plants and facilities for the processing of lead, zinc and silver ore at the location Tisovci, Municipality of Vareš.

We would also like to highlight the fact that monitoring has been conducted, and that the monitoring results are publicly available. Regular periodic biodiversity monitoring is being conducted, with a focus on species with conservation status. Terrestrial species, flora and fauna monitoring is carried out during the spring-summer season, while monitoring of aquatic habitats (mountain streams within the potential impact zone of the Vareš mine project) is conducted quarterly. Reports on completed

the company EASTERN MINING d.o.o. on 4 June 2021, No. 527/2021. The exploitation has been approved for a smaller part of the confirmed reserves.

The exploitation field named “Rupice-Juraševac-Breštic” reflects the designation stated in the Concession Agreement No. 04-18-21389/13 of 12 March 2013 and is shown in the situational plan. The exploitation field is physically located within the locality known as “Rupice”, Municipality of Vareš, but the name “Rupice-Juraševac-Breštic” has been retained from the Concession Agreement as the official designation, and is referenced as such in the Decision approving underground exploitation of complex lead, zinc and barite ore with associated mineral components at the exploitation field “Rupice-Juraševac-Breštic”, Municipality of Vareš.

The majority of forest land at the Rupice site (27.7 ha) is state-owned, while 3.7 ha is privately owned forest. By Decision of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Water Management and Forestry (UP-I-08-22/1-155/21, dated 16 July 2021), a change of land use from forest to construction land was approved for the purposes of exploration and exploitation of mineral resources. The Federal Ministry of Energy, Mining and Industry approved underground exploitation of complex lead, zinc and barite ore (UP/I 06-14-1-334/21, dated 14 January 2025), defining the exploitation area at 103.92 ha, including both state-owned and privately owned parcels. The above-ground mine infrastructure was constructed on approximately 30 ha, where forest was removed for the facilities and operational areas. The remaining 73.92 ha within the exploitation field remain intact, with the maintained land function of forest habitat. The company concluded agreements with owners of privately-owned parcels for underground exploitation, without removal of forest cover on those parcels. Mine activities do not endanger forest development on parcels where forest removal is not foreseen. Forest vegetation and soil protection measures are applied in accordance with applicable regulations. The exploitation area is located approximately 10 meters from the nearest forest boundary and is surrounded by coniferous forest. The protected natural area “Gornja Trstionica – Bukovica” is located more than 1.5 km away, while the cultural-historical heritage site the Royal Town Bobovac is located 5.8 km away. No other sensitive areas or assets are located at the mine site.

By Decision of the Federal Ministry of Energy, Mining and Industry, No. UP/I 06-14-1-334/21 dated 14 January 2025, underground exploitation of lead, zinc and silver ore with associated mineral components was approved at the location “Rupice-Juraševac-Breštic”. The Decision specifies coordinates and cadastral parcels included within the approved exploitation area. The total area of the exploitation field is 103.92 ha. All the listed parcels are located within the approved exploitation area and are included in the Decision granting approval for underground exploitation. The above-ground mine infrastructure at Rupice was constructed on cadastral parcels No. 1797/1 and 1831 (state ownership) and on parcels No. 1813, 1814, 1815/1, 1815/2, 1816 and 1828 (operator ownership), totalling approximately 30 ha where forest was removed, facilities constructed, and supporting infrastructure established. On the remaining 73.92 ha within the exploitation field, forest has not been removed and no removal is foreseen. Therefore, parcels outside the constructed above-ground infrastructure area retain their natural purpose as forest land.

The operator owns parts of the parcels, part of the parcels are state-owned, and the remaining parcels are privately owned. The operator concluded contractual agreements with private landowners for the right to use the parcels for underground mineral exploitation at the location “Rupice-Juraševac-Breštic”. All listed privately owned parcels, as well as state-owned and operator-owned parcels, are located outside the area where forest has been removed and above-ground infrastructure constructed. Therefore, these parcels remain forested, and no removal is foreseen, as it is not required for underground mining.

Copies of cadastral maps, land registry excerpts, and possession sheets are provided in the annex of the Application for Renewal of the Environmental Permit, and can be viewed at the Federal Ministry of Environment and Tourism.

- A comprehensive Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) was completed prior to commencement of works. The ESIA was published in 2021 by Wardell Armstrong, London.
- Additionally, an Environmental Impact Study was prepared in accordance with applicable BiH legislation by the Mining Institute Tuzla (2020).
- Full regulatory monitoring is implemented regularly, with engagement of independent accredited laboratories to ensure transparency. Results are reported to the competent institutions in line with water and environmental permits.
- Compensatory measures for degraded forest areas are implemented under the Biodiversity Action Plan in cooperation with the Forest Management Company "ŠPD Vareš", including afforestation of native species and improvement of wildlife, flora, and fauna habitat conditions. Reports on implemented measures are submitted as part of the Annual Biodiversity Report.

The situational plan of the exploitation field "Rupice" in relation to water protection zones and the Bukovica water intake (scale 1:5000) clearly demonstrates separation between the exploitation field and the third (III) water protection zone. Based on the submitted drawings, the exploitation field does not intersect with the third (III) protection zone. The documents contain precise information confirming that the exploitation field and underground mining facilities at the Rupice site are located outside the III water protection zone of the Bukovica water source, i.e. outside the area subject to special measures and restrictions as defined in the Decision on Protection of Drinking Water Sources for the City of Kakanj (Official Gazette of the Zenica-Doboj Canton No. 12/10). Therefore, it is clearly concluded that the "Rupice" location does not conflict with water protection zones of the Bukovica intake.

Position of the Ministry in charge of environment (FMOiT)

In the process of issuing environmental permits and in connection with the concession agreement submitted to this Ministry by the applicant/investor as a binding document, the Federal Ministry of Environment and Tourism is not responsible for the legality of a signed concession agreement, nor for its legal review. Like any other legal acts issued by other competent authorities, this Ministry accepts the document provided that it is valid, issued by the competent authority, duly signed and certified, and submitted either in original or in a certified copy. With regard to potential allegations of unlawfulness or other irregularities concerning legal acts issued by other authorities, the Federal Ministry of Environment and Tourism is not the competent body to carry out such verification. The concession agreement constitutes a public document for which the FMOiT is not competent to conduct legal review. The agreement was issued and signed by the competent authority and is therefore accepted as valid. Any objections related to the Concession Agreement must be directed to the authority that granted the concession.

In this sense, we further state that regarding the underground exploitation and extraction of complex lead, zinc, silver ore and associated mineral components at the "Rupice-Juraševac-Breštic" deposit, Municipality of Vareš, the Federal Ministry of Environment and Tourism issued an environmental permit No. UPI 05/2-02-19-5-60/20 dated 5 February 2021, based on the Environmental Impact Study and supporting documentation. Given that the current environmental permit was issued for a period

of five years and expires on 5 February 2026, the operator submitted a timely Request for Renewal of the Environmental Permit for underground operations at the "Rupice" site, Municipality of Vareš, in accordance with Article 93, Paragraphs 2 and 4 of the Law on Environmental Protection (Official Gazette of the Federation of BiH No. 15/21). The Request for Renewal of the Environmental Permit was made publicly available on 27 October 2025 on the website of the Federal Ministry of Environment and Tourism, in accordance with Article 88 of the Law on Environmental Protection. The Federal Ministry of Environment and Tourism issued an environmental permit for underground exploitation and extraction of complex lead, zinc and silver ore with associated mineral components at the "Rupice-Juraševac-Breštic" deposit, No. UPI 05/2-02-19-5-60/20 dated 5 February 2021 to the operator Eastern Mining d.o.o. Vares, whose name was subsequently changed to Adriatic Metals BH d.o.o. Vares. Following an acquisition, in September 2025, the company was renamed in the court registry to DPMetals BH d.o.o. Vares, Tisovci bb.

The Application for issuance of the environmental permit is available for review at the premises of the Federal Ministry of Environment and Tourism – Sector for Environmental Permits, Hamdije Čemerlića Street No. 2, Sarajevo, Office 310, as well as on the Ministry's website: www.fmoit.gov.ba / environmental permits / public hearings and public consultations. All attachments submitted with the application are available for inspection to interested parties at the Ministry, but are not published online.