

HoD Meeting with Rio Tinto

Thursday, 18 November 2021

Participants:

EUD

- [REDACTED]
- I [REDACTED]
- I [REDACTED]

Rio Tinto:

- [REDACTED]
- I [REDACTED]

The meeting was arranged at the request of Rio Tinto as courtesy meeting between [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Key Points Discussed:

- Update on Jadar project and delays related to pending permits
- Opposition to Rio Tinto's activities
- Rio Tinto's engagement with local community and NGOs
- Industry's interest for value-chain development in Serbia
- Investment in InoBat

1. **Current state of play:** Rio Tinto presented the potential of the Jadar project for creating new jobs and boosting the employment market in Serbia, and at the same time to provide lithium to available markets. Challenges related to politicisation and scrutiny of national and international NGOs impacting the further development and permitting process of the project were described.
2. **Pending procedures:** Applications for relevant permits to allow exploitation have been submitted. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) also assessing cumulative aspects of the project is pending review of the Ministry of Environment for receiving exploitation field licence. In principle, the approval of EIA will enable (a) construction permits (b) the project to be declared of national significance (c) the expropriation of the land (d) the purchase of vital equipment which is costly and cannot be obtained off-the-shelf. Currently, the exploration license allows only for the tenure of the land, it does not create any new rights over the land. Referendum is expected to take place in either May or June, after the April elections.
3. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED].

4. **Delays in the process:** According to Rio Tinto, certain delays on moving forward with the procedure come along with the politicisation of the matter by national NGOs. While their survey shows that 60% of local communities were in favour of the project, national NGOs misinform the public, both on a domestic and on an international level. In that sense, Rio Tinto identified three layers of opposition that Jadar project is experiencing (1) concerns of local residents (2) Biases and fears coming from previous mining projects, where chemical products ended up in rivers (3) Scrutiny and opposition from external NGOs , both on a national and international level.

5. **Relationship with the public and NGOs:** Rio Tinto has been proactive in approaching the local community and those affected from the project. They have been hearing their concerns and working with them to find sustainable solutions. Rio Tinto has also been proactive in approaching NGOs and those opposing to the project. Not all NGOs were willing to meet, according to Rio Tinto.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

6. **Mistrust by locals:** Local experts from Serbia have been engaged in the project, because, as claimed by Rio Tinto, there is a certain level of mistrust towards private cooperative companies by the Serbian public. The public is also concerned on whether EU standards will be met in the construction and execution phases, as Serbia is not yet a full EU member state.

7. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED], Rio Tinto would prefer that an independent organisation provides an independent review on the EIA.

8. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

9. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED].

10. [REDACTED] informed that the EU was following the Jadar project and related developments in Serbia closely, as it considers the establishment of a vertically integrated critical raw materials and battery value chain in Serbia a good opportunity for Serbia's socio-economic development. [REDACTED] stressed that any project was expected to be developed and carried out in accordance with the highest environmental standards, including those on public consultations and access to information. The EU has an ambition for more resilient and sustainable supply-chains towards a green and digital transition and this ambition was illustrated in the strategic partnership on raw materials, a general framework for cooperation on critical raw materials.

11. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]