

## 12. Mining Lithium in Serbia

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*Germany's Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Serbia's President in Belgrade (Image: Sebastian Kahnert / dpa).*

### Summary

This case study focuses on the issue of lithium mining in Serbia, with particular attention to the narratives and responses surrounding the Jadar project – a planned lithium mine by the company Rio Tinto. Since 2019, the project has been at the centre of public debate. It has sparked significant resistance, initially from the local population and later from the wider public and most opposition parties. In contrast, the Government of the Republic of Serbia and Rio Tinto continue to promote the project, emphasising its proposed benefits, often with support from EU officials.

Using discourse analysis, this case study examines the varying political stances on lithium extraction in Serbia and how these actors influence one another. In parallel, a review of the relevant literature highlights the potential social, environmental, and economic impacts of the Jadar project.

The study also examines the impact of key EU policy documents – primarily the European Green Deal, the Critical Raw Materials Act (CRMA), and documents on EU–Serbia cooperation – on the development of new extractivist projects.

Using the GreenPaths analytical framework, this case study addresses *social impacts* in the context of *loss and damage*. At the project level, the central concept is *decarbonisation*; at the sectoral level, the focus is on *renewables*; and at the case study level, the key concept is *new extractivism*.

### Key data points

- 34.75% of agricultural land in the City of Loznica will be potentially affected by lithium mining.
- 38.2% of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the City of Loznica.
- Serbia's share of renewable energy in transportation is currently 0.599%.

