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Contents

[Industry News](#)

[Bulgaria News](#)

[Economic
Indices](#)

[Economic
news from
Bulgaria](#)

[World News](#)

[Industry News](#)

[International
News](#)



LONDON METAL EXCHANGE

Official Settlement Prices, USD/metric tonne, 17 October 2022

Contract	Al alloy	Aluminium	Copper	Lead	Nickel	Tin	Zinc	NASAAC
Cash Bid	1750.00	2239.00	7710.00	2075.00	-	19675.00	2903.00	2440.00
Cash Offer	1760.00	2240.00	7715.00	2077.00	-	19700.00	2905.00	2450.00
3-months Bid	1750.00	2240.00	7614.00	2030.00	-	19700.00	2875.50	2456.00
3-months Offer	1760.00	2240.50	7615.00	2031.00	-	19800.00	2876.50	2466.00
15-months Bid						18910.00		
15-months Offer						18960.00		

INDUSTRY NEWS

⇒ The copper industry is energy intensive, but Aurubis strives to be an energy efficient company

"Aurubis Bulgaria" is the largest copper metallurgy enterprise in Southeastern Europe. A year ago it was certified with The Copper Mark and became the first of the Aurubis group and one of the first in the world to meet the requirements of this new standard for sustainable development in the mining industry. In 2021, "Aurubis Bulgaria", together with "CEZ Bulgaria", built the largest photovoltaic park for its own needs in our country. The ten megawatt "Aurubis-1" is located on the site of the plant - on a reclaimed old landfill to save agricultural land, the 20,000 panels now installed produce about 11,700 megawatt hours per year. The plant covers only 2.5% of the plant's average annual electricity consumption. The company's goal is to build new renewable capacities in the next eight years, so that one fifth of the consumed energy is produced from its own sources. Projects have been developed for two new solar power plants, and the possibility of wind energy is also being explored. An energy strategy has been created with two main pillars: optimization with the introduction of energy-efficient technologies and limiting dependence on the electricity market with the construction of own RES capacities. The company is also in the process of certification according to the ISO 50001:2018 energy management standard. In a strategic plan, in 2030, "Aurubis Bulgaria" should cover 20% of its needs with "in-house" produced energy, and by 2050, half of the consumption should be from its own renewable sources. The "Aurubis" group started tests in industrial scale to use hydrogen instead of fossil fuels, as hydrogen emerges as one of the main energy alternatives in the coming decades.

economic.bg, October 18, 2022

BULGARIA NEWS

Economic Indices

⇒ Bulgaria takes on a new debt of BGN 200 million

Bulgaria will additionally request a new debt of BGN 200 million in the form of government securities. So far, just over 2.45 billion BGN have been withdrawn from the domestic market, and the issues are becoming more and more unprofitable for the state. The government securities offered for sale at this auction are for five and a half years at a fixed interest rate of 3.2%. The same papers were offered at the end of September and in the same amount of BGN 200 million. However, then the Ministry of Finance approved orders for less than BGN 150 million, writes BNR. Outside the domestic market, this year our country took on an external debt of 2.25 billion euros. In total, for the entire year, the debt limit, regardless of whether it is external or internal market, is BGN 10.3 billion. When the limit was increased during the summer budget update, the goal was to ensure payment of a large due date next year.

24 chasa, October 18, 2022

⇒ Inflation continues to rise

Goods and services in Bulgaria continue to rise in price, according to the data of the National Statistical Institute. In September, the increase was 18.7% compared to the same month of the previous year, and compared to August it was 1.2%. The latest forecast of the BNB is that inflation will slow down at the end of the year. In September 2022, compared to the previous month, the largest increase in prices was in the groups: education (+5.4%), housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels (+4.2%) and food products and non-alcoholic beverages (+2.3%). A decrease in prices was registered in the entertainment and culture groups (-4.6%), transport (-2.9%) and communications (-1.8%). As for food, leafy vegetables - by 9.9%, tomatoes - by 7%, eggs - by 6.5%, cheese - by 4.5%, beer - by 2.9% are the most expensive. A more significant price increase was observed in non-food goods, with double-digit increases in some fuels and heating materials. Methane continues to increase in price - by 18.3% during the month, and central gas supply - by 17%. Automobile fuels continue to become cheaper, with gas becoming cheaper by 10.4%, and mainstream gasoline A95H - by 6.4%.

Dnevnik, October 18, 2022

⇒ BNB predicts GDP growth of 2.8% in 2022 and 0.1% in 2023

The Bulgarian National Bank predicts that Bulgaria's real GDP growth will slow to 2.8 percent this year and to 0.1 percent in 2023. After that, however, GDP will accelerate to 3.4% in 2024. The expansion of the negative contribution of net exports and the slowdown in the growth of private consumption as a result of the negative effect of the acceleration of inflation on the real disposable income of households will contribute to the lower growth of economic activity this year. Annual inflation, as measured by the Harmonized Index of Consumer Prices (HICP), is forecast to reach 14.9% at the end of this year. At the end of 2024, the BNB predicts a further slowdown in inflation to 3.4 percent.

Banker, October 17, 2022

⇒ Pension expenses exceeded BGN 11 billion

For the first nine months of this year, pension costs amounted to BGN 11.083 billion or an average of BGN 1.23 billion per month, it is clear from the data on the Consolidated Budget of the State Public Insurance (DOO), published by the National Insurance Institute. The amount increased by BGN 1.4 billion or 14.5% compared to the same period last year in 2021. The total expenses of the consolidated budget of the DOO as of the end of September amounted to BGN 12.9 billion, which represents the implementation of 70.7% of the

18.10.2022

1 GBP = 2,26763 BGN

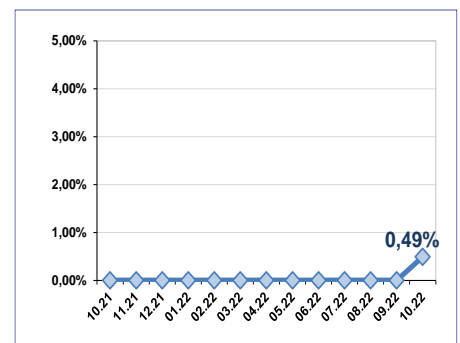
1 USD = 2,00825 BGN

1 EUR = 1.95583 BGN



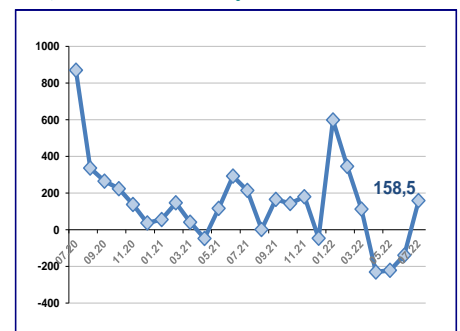
Main Interest Rate

0.49% on 01.10.2022



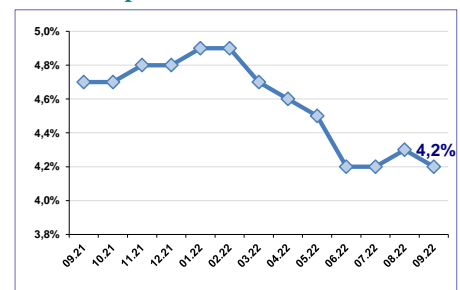
FDI Flow in Bulgaria

158,5 mln EUR in July 2022



Unemployment Rate

4.2% in September 2022



Employment Agency

planned expenses for the year. The amount increased by BGN 1.09 billion compared to the same period last year. Traditionally, revenues from the budget of the LLC seriously lag behind the expenditure part. For the first seven months of this year, the total amount of reported revenues reached BGN 7.25 billion or 75% of the set implementation plan for this year. Revenues increased by BGN 603.2 million compared to the same period last year. To compensate for the difference between the income and expenditure part, the total amount of reported transfers under the consolidated budget of DOO at the end of September amounted to BGN 5.611 billion.

actualno.com, October 17, 2022

⇒ **Bulgaria exported goods for 31.8 billion euros from January to August, 42% more than the previous year.**

The export of goods from Bulgaria increased by 42% in January - August compared to the same period last year. The domestic export of goods amounted to 31.8 billion euros, according to the initial data from the Eurostat report, BTA reported. For the same months of this year, again on an annual basis, imports into Bulgaria grew by 46%, up to 35.9 billion euros. For the same period, the trade balance of our country, as a result of the volumes of imports and exports, was in deficit, in the amount of 4.1 billion euros. In trade with EU countries, domestic statistics registered a surplus of 1.5 billion euros, and in trade with third countries (outside the Union) a deficit of 5.6 billion euros. The volume of exports of goods from the European Union in August compared to the same month last year jumped by 24.2 percent from 166.7 billion euros to 207.1 billion euros. At the same time, imports into the Union amounted to EUR 271.8 billion, an increase of 56.4 percent compared to August 2021, when it was EUR 173.8 billion. As a result, the EU recorded a deficit of €64.7 billion in its goods trade with the rest of the world in August 2022 - a significant increase compared to the €7.1 billion deficit reported in August last year. This is according to the initial assessment of the European statistical agency Eurostat, published today on its website, BTA reported. For the same period, trade between EU member states increased by 32.3 percent to 329.5 billion euros.

24 chasa, October 17, 2022

⇒ **By BGN 1.4 billion more are the expenses for pensions since the beginning of the year**

The expenses for pensions from the State Social Insurance (SSI) for the first nine months of the year are more than BGN 1.4 billion more compared to the same period in 2021. This was announced by the press center of the National Social Security Institute (NSI). As of September 30, 2022, the total amount of reported revenues is BGN 7.26 billion, which represents 75% implementation of the plan for the year. The received revenues are BGN 603.2 million more than in the same period of 2021. The total reported expenses amount to BGN 12.9 billion or 70.7% of the plan for the year. Pensions take up the largest share of expenses in the structure of total expenses in the budget of the LLC - BGN 11.08 billion or 71.5% of the plan for the year. For payment of the so-called covid supplements of BGN 60 to the pensions of all pensioners, BGN 742.2 million were spent. BGN 56.9 million were spent on one-time supplements of BGN 75 to vaccinated pensioners.

BTA, October 14, 2022

⇒ **Financial assets of Bulgarians grew by 6% in 2021 to 100 billion euros**

Gross financial assets of Bulgarian households grew by 6.1% in 2021 to 100 billion euros, which is below the long-term average of 7.5% per year over the past decade, according to the Allianz Global Wealth Report. One of the drivers of growth was assets in the form of insurance and pension funds, which recorded a steady increase of 13%, fueled by a growing share of new savings of €1.4 billion. However, most of the new savings ended up in bank deposits (3 billion euros), increasing these assets by 9.8%. The stock has seen growth of just 2.2% in 2021, well below the long-term average of 6.0%. In addition to the fluctuating Bulgarian stock market, this is also due to the weak revenues in the state of only 0.5 billion euros (-75% compared to 2020). Net financial assets increased by 4.9%, reaching 11,410 euros per capita, which ranks Bulgaria in 36th place in the survey. Regarding the household debt in Bulgaria in 2021, it increased by 10.8%. The debt-to-GDP ratio remains at 31% thanks to strong economic growth. This roughly corresponds to the average of 33% for Eastern European EU countries.

investor.bg, October 13, 2022

⇒ **The BNB specifies the fees to cover administrative costs**

The Management Board of the Bulgarian National Bank (BNB) adopted an Ordinance amending and supplementing Ordinance No. 40 on determining the amount of fees to cover the administrative costs of the central bank, which are related to its supervisory and restructuring functions. The adopted changes are mainly related to specifying the categories of obliged entities and the procedure for calculating fees to cover the relevant administrative costs of the Bulgarian National Bank. It also concerns the cases of new obliged entities - banking group, financial holding or financial holding with mixed activity, in relation to which the central bank carries out supervision on a consolidated basis.

Banker, October 13, 2022

⇒ **On an annual basis, Bulgaria again has the highest growth in industrial production in the EU - 16.5 percent**

In Bulgaria, in August compared to July, industrial production slowed down to 0.7 percent, while in July, on a monthly basis, the domestic indicator increased by 1.1 percent. On an annual basis, domestic industrial production took first place among

the member countries with the highest growth in the indicator in August, recording an increase of 16.5 percent. That still represented a slowdown compared to July, when it reached 18 percent, Eurostat's seasonally adjusted data showed. Industrial production among the countries of the European Union rose by 1.1 percent in August on a monthly basis, while the indicator in the Eurozone grew by 1.5 percent, Eurostat reported. In July, compared to a month earlier, industrial production fell in both the EU and the currency area by 1.5 percent and 2.3 percent, respectively, according to revised data. In August, compared to the same month in 2021, the industrial production increased by 3.5 percent in the EU and by 2.5 percent in the euro area.

BTA, October 13, 2022

⇒ **The average insurance income for August is BGN 1,297.11**

The National Insurance Institute announced that the amount of the average insurance income for the country for the month of August 2022 is BGN 1,297.11. On an annual basis, the average insurance income from September 1, 2021 to August 31, 2022 is BGN 1,238.96. The determined average monthly insurance income for the country for the specified period is used in calculating the amounts of the newly granted pensions in the month of September 2022, according to Art. 70, para. 3 of the Social Security Code, the National Social Insurance Institution recalls.

Trud, October 12, 2022

⇒ **Nearly BGN 2 billion paid under the 60/40 measure**

For 28 months - from March 2020 to June 2022, a total of 242 payments were made under the 60/40 measure according to NOI data, and a total of BGN 1,995,388.2 thousand were paid. Nearly 13,700 employers were supported for at least one month. Nearly 342,000 workers and employees are included in the measure for at least one month. Almost 2/3 of the participating employers are in 3 economic activities (hotels and restaurants, trade and repair of cars and motorcycles, processing industry)

economy.bg, October 12, 2022

Economic News from Bulgaria

⇒ An investment map for mining will support Bulgaria's re-industrialisation

Work has started on the creation of an investment map for the re-industrialisation of Bulgaria, which will be based on the raw materials extracted in the country. This was agreed between the Minister of Economy and Industry Nikola Stoyanov and the Bulgarian Chamber of Mining and Geology, the economic ministry said. "Our country must stop being a donor of raw materials for developed economies and therefore our goal is to attract investors using our resources as close to them as possible. By developing industrial zones close to major mineral deposits and making the conditions attractive enough for investment in them, we have every chance of attracting strategic investors and awakening the manufacturing process in our country. This is a guarantee for economic growth and increase in the income of the population in whole regions," said Minister Stoyanov. The Bulgarian Chamber of Mining and Geology will assist by providing updates for the preparation of the investment map, which will contain opportunities for specific industries by region in the country, determined on the basis of existing raw materials. The investment map will be presented to the economic advisors in the Trade and Economic Affairs Offices (TEAO), who will play a key role in presenting it to foreign businesses. Key enterprises in each sector around the world using raw materials that can be sourced in Bulgaria will be identified.

Investor.bg, October 17, 2022

⇒ Dundee mined 13% more gold than Chelopech

The Canadian gold mining company Dundee Precious Metals announced another strong production results from its two gold and copper mines in Bulgaria - "Ada Tepe" and "Chelopech". For the third quarter of this year, less ore was processed from the two deposits, but the gold extracted from "Chelopech" significantly exceeded the result of the third quarter of last year. The Chelopech mine produced 43,100 ounces of gold, representing growth of around 13% year-on-year. There, gold production was in line with expectations and copper production was less than expected, reflecting lower copper head levels. In total, for the months between July and September, the amount of copper produced is about 3 thousand tons. Ada Tepe produced 20,800 ounces of gold in the third quarter, in line with expectations. Gold grades there are expected to increase in the fourth quarter, according to the company's plan for the mine. On an annual basis, the volume of mined gold is falling by about a third.

economic.bg, October 14, 2022

⇒ Freight rail traffic is taken out of cities

The railway section Sofia - Voluyak - Hrabarsko - Batanovtsi, part of the railway line with the direction Vidin - Sofia - Radomir - Kulata is of global importance for the development of the Trans-European railway network, Freight Railway Corridor VII "Orient/Eastern Mediterranean". The concept of the State Enterprise "National Railway Infrastructure Company" for the modernization of the railway lines in the direction from Vidin (Romanian border) to Kulata (border with Greece) through the capital of Bulgaria is to ensure the safe passage of a large part of freight traffic outside the urbanized territories of the country. For this purpose, freight traffic will pass along the railway line Voluyak - Razmenna - Pernik Distribution/Batanovtsi. This will achieve a partial unloading of "Sofia Central Station" from freight trains. The project "Modernization of the railway line Sofia - Pernik - Radomir - part of the Trans-European transport network" was commissioned. For its implementation, a public contract for construction in the railway section Pernik - Radomir with a connection to the Batanovtsi station is to be announced. In order to increase the capacity of freight traffic on the railway lines within the scope of the Sofia railway junction, the Iliantsi and Voluyak stations will be designated as distribution points for freight traffic. And after the planned implementation of the connection with the Republic of North Macedonia, freight traffic will be directed in the direction of Pan-European Transport Corridor VIII. The corridor is intermodal and includes ports, roads, railways, airports, combined and intermodal transport infrastructures - support facilities needed to manage traffic along the route.

Banker, October 17, 2022

⇒ The Pleven plant "Leoni Bulgaria" remains in the German group "Leoni"

The Competition Commission has authorized Stark Corporation Public Company Limited of Thailand to acquire, directly or indirectly through a wholly-owned subsidiary, sole control of Leonie Cable GmbH, Germany and Leonische Holding Inc. , USA, as well as on the enterprises controlled by them. "Leoni Cable" is controlled solely by "Leoni" AG (Leoni AG). Leonie Holding is under the independent control of Leoni Bordnetz-Systeme GmbH - Würzburg, which in turn is controlled solely by Leoni AG. The planned transaction is carried out on the basis of a Share Purchase Agreement between "Leoni" AG and "Leoni Bordnetz-Systeme" as sellers, and "Stark" as buyer. Stark manufactures and sells wires and cables in four product categories. The company is not active in the production and supply of cables for the automotive sector. Stark owns and operates three manufacturing facilities in Thailand and one in Vietnam. "Leoni Bulgaria" EOOD operates on the territory of Bulgaria, with the sole owner of its capital "Leoni Bordnetz-Systeme" GmbH. The Bulgarian plant is part of another direction within the "Leoni" group - "Wiring Systems Division". So it remains part of the Leoni group of companies. The sale, which

KCK is analyzing, concerns only the automotive cables division, with which "Leoni Bulgaria" has nothing to do with this transaction. The German LEONI started business in Bulgaria in 2018. The plant in Pleven is a supplier of cable systems for car manufacturers. The plant is among the largest employers in Northern Bulgaria.

Banker, October 17, 2022

⇒ **Bulgaria will participate in the privatization of the ports in Alexandroupolis and Kavala**

Bulgaria will participate in the upcoming procedure for the privatization of the Greek ports in Alexandroupolis and Kavala, announced at a press conference the Minister of Foreign Affairs Nikolay Milkov. Back in March, Kiril Petkov's government requested that our country participate in a consortium that would compete for the port. The ownership of our state in this consortium will be between 10% and 15%. The granting of a concession to Greece's major ports was one of the main conditions some time ago for the creditors of our southern neighbor to approve the latest aid package for the country, which had problems servicing its foreign debt. The state privatization fund TAIPED has been trying for 4 years to privatize Alexandroupolis port. After the war in Ukraine, the port acquired a crucial entry point for sending military materials to Ukraine, as well as a strategic location for the diversification of European energy sources. It is located in the most northeastern part of the country, 18 miles west of the border with Turkey and 30 miles south of Bulgaria. The port can accommodate ships up to 650 feet in length. Its proximity to the newly improved road network and its connection to the railways make it one of the most important ports in Greece.

business.dir.bg, October 17, 2022

⇒ **"Eurohold" acquired the remaining shares of CEZ**

The energy holding Eastern European Electric Company B.V. (EEEC), which is part of "Eurohold Bulgaria" AD and the majority owner of "Electrohold", has bought out the minority stakes in the two subsidiary companies of the energy group - "Electrodistribution grid west" AD (the previous name "CEZ Distribution Bulgaria" AD) and "Electrohold Sales" AD (previously known as "CEZ Electro Bulgaria"). The two companies have been removed from trading on the Bulgarian Stock Exchange, and accordingly the two companies will be delisted from the register of public companies of the Financial Supervision Commission. The share buyback procedure started on August 29 and ended on September 7. The subholding acquired an additional 14,416 shares of "ERM Zapad" for nearly BGN 4.38 million (2.24 million euros) or 303.55 BGN (155.2 euros) per share, as well as 117 shares of Electrohold Sales for BGN 3.41 million (EUR 1.74 million) or BGN 29,161.02 (EUR 14,909.79) for one share. In practice, the intentions of the subsidiary of Eurohold and the direct owner of the two companies acquired by the Czech CEZ Eastern European Electric Company (Eastern European Electric Company B.V. - EEEEC) to raise its stake in the public companies "Electric Distribution Networks West" (EPM West, with the previous name "CEZ Distribution Bulgaria" and in "Electrohold Sales" or the former "CEZ Electro Bulgaria" has already been completed.

mediapool.bg, October 17, 2022

⇒ **"Bulgargaz" offered to reduce gas prices by nearly 30% in November**

"Bulgargaz" submitted to the Commission for Energy and Water Regulation an application for approval of the price for the month of November in the amount of BGN 166 and 14 cents. The proposed price is approximately two times lower than the prices of European gas hubs. This significant difference is due to the extremely competitive prices received within the framework of the tender procedure for the supply of natural gas carried out by "Bulgargaz", as well as the possibility to supply the full Azeri quantities.

profit.bg, October 12, 2022

⇒ **Danube transports are decreasing, but freight rates are increasing**

In 2022, a serious decrease in ship traffic is reported, both compared to the previous two years and compared to the pre-pandemic 2019. If we compare only the three months with the lowest waters – June, July and August – with the same months of 2019, the difference in the number of vessels that passed along the lower reaches of the river is more than 2.5 times: below 1700 versus nearly 4400, respectively of the tonnage of transported goods, the difference is even greater, since in 2019. The waters were not so low and therefore no such great restrictions were imposed on the navigation of ships. A decline is also reported on passenger ships. From the beginning of this year to the end of August, there were 227 visitors to Ruse, while for the same period of 2019, the city was visited by 357 passenger ships. Shippers also report two positive trends for shipping. The first is related to the war in Ukraine and the export of Ukrainian grain. The second trend is the unexpected export of Bulgarian coal to Serbia, transported by barges along the Danube from Ruse and Svishtov to Belgrade. It is about the export of 1.7 million tons of lignite from Mini "Maritsa Iztok", which started two months ago and will continue until the end of the upcoming winter. Freight rates for transporting this coal are also high – 15-20 euros per ton.

Banker, October 12, 2022

⇒ **"Mini Otkrit Vagledobiv" EAD is the owner of the building of the Mining Directorate in Pernik, announced for sale**

"Mini Otkrit Vagledobiv" EAD is the owner of the building of the Mining Directorate in Pernik, announced for sale, the press center of the National Revenue Agency (NRA) informed BTA. The company has accumulated liabilities in the amount of BGN 48,351,746.55 until June 2020, according to a report published on the NRA website. They are for a period of about 9 years and are for unpaid taxes and social security contributions, the NRA press center specified. On October 4, the NRA announced the sale of the building of the Mining Directorate, emblematic of Pernik, by secret bidding at a starting price of BGN 7,151,043. It was built in 1932 according to a project by the architects Kosta Nikolov and Iliya Popov. The external layout of the building is in neoclassical style, the interior is influenced by early Gothic. It is an immovable cultural asset falling within the scope of a territory with cultural and historical heritage with the status of a group immovable cultural asset "Set of buildings for the needs of the mining industry in the Pernik mine". In Pernik, there is a petition against the sale of the Mining Directorate with the request that the ownership of the building be transferred to the state or the municipality.

BTA, October 17, 2022

⇒ **The first mine-museum in the Balkans opened its doors in Madan**

The first mine-museum for tourists opened its doors in Madan. The underground mine exposure was created under the "TERRA-MINE" project in the field of mining tourism with funding from the Cross-Border Cooperation Program INTERREG V "Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020". The Municipality of Madan defends the project in partnership with the Greek Municipality of Pylea - Hortiatis, the Thracian University "Democritus", the International Greek University, Department of "Business Administration", discipline "Tourism Management" and the University of Mining and Geology "St. Ivan Rilski". The project also rehabilitated the unique Crystal Hall with nearly 600 exhibits. The "Sharenka" cave, which is about 2 km from the mining town, has also been repaired and secured. In it, tourists can learn about the way in which the Thracians mined ore as early as the Bronze Age /16-12 BC/

BNR, October 18, 2022

⇒ **Increasing energy efficiency in the upcoming investments in "MONEK - YUG"**

"MONEK - YUG" JSC, Kardzhali, specializes in the production of mining and beneficiation and metallurgical equipment, mining and drilling tools, spare parts, rubber products, repair and related engineering activities. Main customers are mainly companies from Germany, Austria, Russia, Turkey and Kazakhstan. One of the main productions of the plant is for mining and drilling tools, which occupies about 25% of the total volume of production. The holding, of which "Monek-YUG" AD (CSIF) is a part, plans to invest nearly BGN 20 million in the Kardzhali enterprise in the next 5 years. Accordingly, a priority goal is for the company to operate entirely with energy from renewable sources by 2024. The increase in energy efficiency will be the main driver of the upcoming investments, accordingly, funds are provided both for the renovation of the existing base and for the renewal of the metal cutting machines with those of a new generation, which are significantly more productive and autonomous. The plan is to increase the direct production staff with new up to 120 jobs in the shortest possible time, so that we have the opportunity to utilize the market potential of our current customers, said the executive director, engineer Lyubomir Gradev.

rodopi24, October 13, 2022

⇒ **"Trace Group Hold" will repair a section of the Nis-Dimitrovgrad railway line in Serbia**

The construction company "Trace Group Hold" JSC has signed a contract for the reconstruction and modernization of a section of the Nis-Dimitrovgrad railway line in Serbia, the company reports through BSE-Sofia. The section that the company will repair is Prosek (Sichevo) - Dimitrovgrad. "Trace Group Hold" is part of a consortium for the repair of the railway line - CONSORTIUM TRACE-CAF-START, being a leading partner. The other companies in the association are Consorzio Armatori Ferroviari S.C.p.A, Italy, and Start Engineering AD, Bulgaria. The value for the performance of the activities under the contract is 169,681,433.21 euros. The term of execution is 1,276 calendar days, or about 3 and a half years. The contracting authority is the joint-stock company for the management of the public railway infrastructure in Serbia "Serbian Railway Infrastructure". The contract was financed by the European Investment Bank (EIB). This year, "Trace Group Hold" also started work on a road section in Serbia for 3.2 million euros, which is financed by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The company should already be at the final stage of construction activities. In Romania, the company, together with the Romanian company SC CONI SRL, will build over a 28-kilometer highway section of the Ploiesti - Buzău highway for over 253.2 million euros.

Investor.bg, October 14, 2022

WORLD NEWS

Industry News

⇒ US mulls blocking Russian aluminum imports

The US is considering blocking Russian aluminum imports, Reuters and Bloomberg reported citing unnamed sources close to the administration of President Joe Biden. As covered in detail by IntelliNews, although Russian metallurgy is buckling under wartime economic realities, some Russian metals are deeply embedded in global markets and are hard to sanction. Previously in July, the US has exempted strategic metals such as crude aluminum, palladium, rhodium, nickel and titanium from a hike in import tariffs. According to the official trade data studied last month by Reuters, EU and US imports of Russian aluminum and nickel in March-June 2022 jumped by 70% to \$2bn. The analysts surveyed by Reuters said the US and EU are avoiding repeating the fallout from the 2018 sanctions on Russian aluminum on the construction, auto and power sectors. But this time around as a reaction to the latest escalation of the Ukraine war by Russia, the US could reportedly choose between a blanket aluminum import ban, raising tariffs so much that it would effectively halt imports, or sanctioning Russian aluminum major United Company Rusal directly, according to Bloomberg sources. Rusal of Russian billionaire Oleg Deripaska is the world's largest aluminum producer outside China.

intellinews.com, October 14, 2022

⇒ Japan's Oct-Dec crude steel output forecast to slip

Japan's crude steel output is expected to fall for a fourth consecutive quarter in the last three months of the year, due to a slow pick-up in auto production amid a shortage of chips, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) said. METI forecast a 6.8% fall to 22.55 million tonnes in the October-December period from 24.20 million tonnes a year earlier, as parts-supply disruptions continue to affect Japanese automakers' global production. That would be up 0.5% increase from 22.44 million tonnes in the July-September quarter. "Automobile production is expected to recover gradually, but there is also a downside risk since the shortage of semiconductors has not been completely eliminated," Daisuke Matsuno, director of the metal industries division at METI, told a news conference. Carmakers such as Toyota Motor Corp and Honda Motor Co have lowered their output targets for October as they battle with persistent supply chain and logistical problems. Demand for steel products, including those for export, is forecast to decline 3.8% to 20.65 million tonnes from a year earlier, the ministry said, citing an industry survey.

reuters.com, October 14, 2022

⇒ GM enters collaboration agreement with Queensland Pacific Metals for nickel from Australia

General Motors Co. has secured a new source of cost-competitive nickel and cobalt for Ultium battery cells after making a strategic investment in Queensland Pacific Metals of Australia. The nickel laterite ore is expected to be processed using a new and proprietary process that helps reduce waste with no requirement of a tailings dam. As part of the agreement, GM is expected to invest up to \$69 million in Queensland Pacific Metals for the development of its proposed Townsville Energy Chemicals Hub (TECH) Project in Northern Australia. The nickel and cobalt from Queensland Pacific Metals will help power a broad portfolio of trucks, SUVs, vans and luxury vehicles from GM, including the Chevrolet Silverado EV, GMC HUMMER EV Pickup and SUV, Cadillac LYRIQ, Chevrolet Blazer EV and Chevrolet Equinox EV. "The collaboration with Queensland Pacific Metals will provide GM with a secure, cost-competitive and long-term supply of nickel and cobalt from a free-trade agreement partner to help support our fast-growing EV production needs," said Jeff Morrison, GM vice president, Global Purchasing and Supply Chain. "Importantly, the agreement demonstrates our commitment to building strong supplier relationships and is aligned with our approach to responsible sourcing and supply chain management."

automotiveworld.com, October 13, 2022

⇒ Rio Tinto sells Roughrider project to Uranium Energy for \$109 million

Uranium Energy has agreed to purchase 100% of the Roughrider project in Saskatchewan for C\$150 million (\$109.2m) from Rio Tinto. Rio will receive C\$80 million in cash and C\$70 million in Uranium Energy stock. The Roughrider uranium project is located 13 km west of the McClean Lake uranium mill. It has a historic resource of 58 million lb. uranium oxide (U₃O₈) at an average grade of 4.73% U₃O₈ in all categories. (This estimate is not NI 43-101 compliant.) Uranium Energy recently outbid Denison Mines for UEX Corp., whose assets include the Raven-Horseshoe Hidden Bay and Christie Lake properties in the Athabasca Basin. Together, these assets are viewed by Uranium Energy as a potential means to increasing its uranium production. Uranium Energy is planning its next steps at Roughrider, namely updating the technical report summary by including 225,000 metres of diamond drilling completed on the property. The company also plans to proceed with permitting for in situ recovery (ISR) at Roughrider.

mining.com, October 14, 2022

International News

⇒ Volkswagen to invest up to €2 billion in joint venture in China

Volkswagen plans to invest up to €2 billion in a joint venture with China's Horizon Robotics, Handelsblatt and Manager Magazin reported. Earlier, Reuters reported that VW was planning a significant investment in a joint venture in the country to produce software. The automaker, which makes about 40 percent of its sales and half of its profits in China, already conducts research and development for automotive technology in the country, considered a more advanced market for digital innovation than Europe or the United States, Reuters writes. The company operates multiple joint ventures in China, holding a 75% stake in its venture with JAC, a 50% stake with SAIC and a 40% stake with FAW.

economy.bg, October 14, 2022

⇒ Canada's Magna Industrial is setting up an automotive parts plant in North Macedonia

Canada-based automotive parts supplier Magna International has opened an office in North Macedonia, the government press office said. The 17,000 sqm factory is located in the technological industrial development zone in Struga, in the southwest of the country, which is about 270 km from Sofia. The new plant in Struga is Magna's first production facility in northern Macedonia and will support several European car manufacturers. Magna International is one of the largest automotive parts suppliers in the world. There are 161,000 employees and sales centers in 28 countries, according to the latest data on the company's website. The factory will produce exterior mirror systems, including actuators and wiring harnesses, for several European automotive manufacturers. Financial details of the company's investment in North Macedonia were not available. In July 2021, when the government of Northern Macedonia announced the planned opening of the factory, it said that the investment would total EUR 35 million.

money.bg, October 13, 2022

⇒ Knauf invests €200 million in two new plants in Romania

German group Knauf will invest more than €200 million in two factories, central Romania. They will be located in the counties of Mures and Cluj. In Mures county, Knauf will invest €135 million in an insulation materials factory. The investment consists in the renovation of a factory purchased by the company. The new production facility should be ready in 2024 and will provide an annual output of more than 75,000 tonnes of mineral wool. In addition to the domestic market, the factory will also produce for export to markets in Central and Eastern Europe. Knauf purchased the mineral glass wool factory in March this year and has already invested EUR 4 million in the modernisation of the production facility. In addition, the group plans to invest EUR 76 million in the construction of a plasterboard and metal profile factory in Huedin (Cluj). Construction of the factory there will start in 2023 and production will start in the second half of 2024, creating 100 jobs. Half of the production is destined for the domestic market and the rest is intended for export to nearby countries such as Hungary, Serbia and Moldova. The total investment in the two factories is expected to create more than 200 jobs.

money.bg, October 13, 2022

⇒ UK's Royal Mint lifted by market turmoil as demand for gold surges

Market turmoil during the past year has boosted the performance of the Royal Mint as demand for gold coins and precious metals surged, pushing the UK's oldest surviving manufacturer's profits to a record high. The wholly state-owned company has supplied the country's coins since the reign of King Alfred the Great more than 1,100 years ago. But in its modern form it has expanded into sales of precious metals, historic coins, jewellery and luxury collectibles. A record number of investors hedged their portfolios with physical precious metals such as gold and silver during the course of its latest financial year to the end of March, pushing the Mint's pre-tax profits to £18mn, up from £12.4mn in the previous 12 month period. Revenues rose from £1.1bn to £1.4bn. Anne Jessopp, chief executive, said that investors moved into physical metals as a safe haven from the upheaval in global markets. Revenue in the US rose by 62 per cent on the back of booming sales of precious metals and commemorative coins. Jessopp has overseen a modernisation of operations at the Royal Mint that started three years ago, when the company posted a loss of £3mn. The Royal Mint will pay a £5mn dividend to the Treasury this year, up from £3.7mn last time. Other plans over the next five years include "opening a new factory to recover gold from electronic waste, expanding into the luxury market with jewellery, and continuing to grow our consumer businesses internationally", Jessopp said. The new plant will use patented chemistry to recover precious metals from electronic waste, generating hundreds of kilograms of precious metals every year.

ft.com, October 14, 2022