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Editors:

Dr.Ridvan Kızılkaya Ondokuz Mayıs University, Faculty of Agriculture Department of Soil Science and Plant Nutrition 55139 Samsun, Turkey

Dr.Coşkun Gülser Ondokuz Mayıs University, Faculty of Agriculture Department of Soil Science and Plant Nutrition 55139 Samsun, Turkey

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Contact:

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Şenkal Sokak 8/6A, Siteler, Ankara, Turkey Ankara University, Faculty of Agriculture, Department of Soil Science and Plant Nutrition, 06110 Dışkapı, Ankara, Turkey

Web: www.toprak.org.tr and www.soil2014.com E-mail: info@toprak.org.tr and oc@soil2014.com



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Soil contamination study around the Buchim Copper Mine, Republic of Macedonia

Todor Serafimovski *, Gerasim Konzulov, Goran Tasev, Violeta Stefanova, Sare Sarafilov

Goce Delcey University, Faculty of Natural and Technical Sciences, 2000 Stip, Macedonia

Abstract

One of the major emission sources of some metals in the eastern part of the R. Macedonia is Bucim copper mine and flotation, near the town of Radovis. Ore excavation is from open pit and the ore tailings are stored in the open, in mine vicinity. The produced copper ore from the mine is processed in the flotation plant; after the flotation of copper minerals, the flotation tailings are separated, disposed of and deposited on a dump site in an adjacent valley near the village Topolnica. During the 35 years of continuous exploitation around the Buchim Mine was created surface waste dump were have been stored more than 150 Mt and more than 100 Mt material within the hydrotailling dam. Within this study a total content of 20 elements was determined in soil samples taken from the vicinity of the "Bucim" mine, covering an area of 14.2 km². Analyses were performed by the ICP-AES. The results have been compared to new Dutchlist and NOAA standards and the following was concluded: As values ranged 13.1÷225 ppm with 20 samples above the optimum (29 ppm As) and 7 above action value (55 ppm As), in that context Cd values ranged 0.67÷17.9 ppm with 17 values above optimum (0.8 ppm Cd) and 1 over the action value (12ppm Cd), Cr with range 30.1÷171 ppm with 6 over optimal value (100ppm Cr) and none above action value (380ppm Cr), Cu with range 17.8÷1734 ppm with 16 over optimal value (36ppm Cu) and 3 above action value (190ppm Cu). Ni with range 9.8÷69.4 ppm with 5 over optimal value (35ppm Ni) and none above action value (210ppm Ni), Pb with range 46÷3456 ppm with 19 over optimal value (85ppm Pb) and 1 above action value (530ppm Pb), Zn with range 88÷3438 ppm with 12 over optimal value (140ppm Zn) and 1 above action value (720ppm Zn), Mn with range 169÷998 ppm with 25 over optimal value (33ppm Mn) and none above action value (48ppm Mn), Fe range 0.73÷5.02% with 21 over optimal value (1.8% Fe) and none above action value (3.2% Fe). The V, Al, Co, also, showed some increased values, but not more than optimal concentration.

Key words: Buchim mine, soil, copper, arsenic, contamination.

*Corresponding author: Todor Serarafimovski

Goce Delcev University, Faculty of Natural and Technical Sciences, 2000 Stip, Macedonia

Tel: +38932550575 E-mail: todor.serafimovski@ugd.edu.mk