



University of Belgrade  
Technical Faculty in Bor



Chamber of Commerce  
and Industry of Serbia

# XV International Mineral Processing & Recycling Conference



INTERNATIONAL MINERAL PROCESSING & RECYCLING CONFERENCE

# Proceedings

Editors:  
Jovica Sokolović  
Milan Trumić

17-19 May  
2023

Belgrade  
SERBIA





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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PLENARY LECTURES</b>	<b>1</b>
L. Guo, Y. Zhao, Q. Ma, G. Tang, C. Jia, C. Li RESEARCH PROGRESS, TRENDS, AND INNOVATIONS OF DEVELOPMENT ON MINING BACKFILL TECHNOLOGY OF UNDERGROUND METALLIFEROUS MINE	3
V.A. Chanturia, V.V. Morozov, G.P. Dvoichenkova, E.L. Chanturia, Yu. A. Podkamenny INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR THE RECOVERY OF ABNORMALLY LUMINESCENT DIAMONDS BASED ON THE USE OF LUMINOPHORE-CONTAINING MODIFIERS	23
G. Vujić N. Maoduš, M. Živančev WTE AS INTEGRATED PART OF CIRCULAR ECONOMY	32
J.C. Gabriel, H. Bo, N. Charpentier, S. Chevrier, Y. Deng, F.Olivier, D. Xia CRITICAL METALS RECOVERY FROM E-WASTE: FROM MICROFLUIDICS HYDROMETALLURGY TO ECONOMICALLY VIABLE PROCESSES	39
<b>SESSION LECTURES</b>	<b>41</b>
F. Nakhaei, I. Jovanović 3D IMAGING AND APPLICATIONS IN MINERAL PROCESSING	43
D. Singh, S. Basu, B. Mishra. R. Bhima Rao NOVEL APPROACHES TO RECOVER TOTAL HEAVY MINERALS FROM DIFFERENT GRADE BEACH SAND DEPOSITS USING GRAVITY CONCENTRATORS	54
M. Trumić, K. Balanović ROLE OF PARTICLE SHAPE IN THE FLOATABILITY OF TONER PARTICLE	64
I. Smičiklas, M. Egerić, M. Jović COPPER SORPTION CAPACITY OF THE SOIL TREATED WITH UNCONVENTIONAL ALKALIZING AGENTS	73
V. Conić, I. Jovanović COPPER ORE BIOLEACHING FROM ECOLOGICAL POINT OF VIEW	79
S. Cvetković, M. Popović, J. Perendija LIFE CYCLE ASSESSMENT AND USE OF NATURAL RESOURCES	89
<b>WORKSHOP PAPERS</b>	<b>95</b>
P. M. Angelopoulos, G. Anastassakis, N. Kountouris, N. Koukoulis, M. Taxiarchou COMBINED USE OF ORGANOSOLV LIGNIN AND XANTHATES ON SPHALERITE FLOTATION FROM MIXED SULPHIDES	97
P. M. Angelopoulos, N. Kountouris, G. Anastassakis, M. Taxiarchou PARTIAL REPLACEMENT OF XANTHATE BY ORGANOSOLV LIGNIN ON PYRITE/ARSENOPYRITE FLOTATION	103
K. Hružová, July Ann Bazar, Leonidas Matsakas, Anders Sand, Ulrika Rova, Paul Christakopoulos ORGANOSOLV LIGNIN PARTICLES: A NOVEL GREEN REAGENT THAT INCREASES THE FLOTATION EFFICIENCY OF SULFIDE ORES	109
A. Peppas, D. Skenderas, P.M. Angelopoulos, C. Politi ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF LIGNIN BASED ECOFRIENDLY SURFACTANTS FOR FLOTATION PROCESSES TOWARDS CURRENT PRACTICES	115

A. Peppas, K. Hurzova, D. Skenderas, C. Politi, L. Matsakas, P.M. Angelopoulos EVALUATION OF BATTERY MINERALS FLOTATION PROCESS ECO FRIENDLINESS UTILISING BIODEGRADABLE LIGNIN REAGENTS	121
A. Peppas, C. Politi, D. Skenderas, P.M. Angelopoulos ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF RARE EARTHS RECOVERY METHOD FROM BAUXITE RESIDUES	126
<b>PAPERS</b>	<b>133</b>
A. Jankovic, M. Sederkennya MODIFIED BOND AND RITTINGER ENERGY-SIZE RELATIONSHIPS FOR LABORATORY FINE GRINDING	135
V. Nikolić, M. Trumić, D. Tanikić OPTIMIZATION OF MICRONIZING ZEOLITE GRINDING USING ARTIFICIAL NEURAL NETWORKS	143
E. Petrakis, K. Komnitsas THE EFFECT OF MICROWAVE RADIATION ON DRY GRINDING KINETICS OF BAUXITE ORE	150
M.H. Tyeb, S. Mishra, A.K. Majumder LSTM AND CNN COMBINATION BASED MODELLING APPROACH FOR PARTITION CURVE PREDICTION IN HYDROCYCLONES	157
I. Jovanović, M.Ž. Trumić, J. Sokolović, M.S. Trumić, J. Nešković DETERMINATION OF LIMITING SETTLING VELOCITY IN THE SLURRY PIPELINE FROM GRINDING PLANT, USING DIFFERENT APPROACHES – A CASE STUDY	163
N. Omarova, R. Sherembayeva, A.Amirkhan, Zh. Ibraybekov, A. Nesipbay FLOTATION OF POLYMETALLIC LEAD-ZINC ORES OF THE BAKALSKOYE DEPOSIT	168
V.A. Chanturiya, I.Zh. Bunin, M.V. Ryazantseva THE APPLICATION OF THE DIELECTRIC BARRIER DISCHARGE (DBD) FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE SEPARATION OF PYRITE AND ARSENOPYRITE	174
V. Ignatkina, A. Kayumov, N. Yergesheva, P. Chernova BASIC SELECTIVE REAGENT REGIMES FOR COMPLEX SULFIDE ORE FLOTATION	179
S. Chaudhuri, S. Maity, S.C. Maji, D. Roy, U.S. Chattopadhyay STUDIES ON THE FLOATABILITY CHARACTERISTICS OF LOW VOLATILE COKING COAL FINES USING X-RAY DIFFRACTION (XRD) ANALYSIS AS A DIAGNOSTIC TOOL	186
V.I. Ryaboi, V.P. Kretov, E.D. Schepeta, I.V. Ryaboi, S.E. Levkovets APPLICATION OF COLLECTOR BTF-15221 IN FLOTATION OF COPPER- AND GOLD - CONTAINING ORES	193
I. Dervišević, A. Dervišević, M. Tomović, J. Galjak COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF REAGENTS FOR GOLD EXTRACTION FROM FLOTATION TAILS	202
E.M.S. Silva, A.C. Silva, J.M.B.S. Cabral, P.S. Oliveira, A.F. Nascimento, A.P. Vieira Filho, S.A. Santos TESTS WITH DIFFERENT FLOCCULANTS FOR CHROMIUM ORE TAILINGS	208
C. Ouyang, B. Lv, K. Jia, Y. Yang STUDY ON THE APPLICATION OF HIGH-EFFICIENCY AND ENVIRONMENT-FRIENDLY COPPER COLLECTOR TO ASSOCIATED COPPER IN AN IRON ORE	214
S. Sredić, Lj. Tankosić KINETIC STUDIES OF THE ADSORPTION POLYACRILAMIDE-BASED FLOCCULANTS ON NATURAL GOETHITE, QUARTZ AND CLAY MINERALS	221

G. D. Bogdanović, D. Marilović, B. Nikolić, S. J. Petrović COLUMN LEACHING OF LOW-GRADE COPPER SULFIDE ORE WITH SULFURIC ACID	230
K. Gáborová, M. Achimovičová, M. Hegedüs, O. Šestinová AN INFLUENCE OF MECHANICAL ACTIVATION ON THE COPPER LEACHING KINETICS OF BERZELIANITE	236
D. Medić, I. Đorđević, M. Nujkić, A. Papludis, V. Nedelkovski, S. Alagić, S. Milić USE OF COPPER POWDER AS A REDUCING AGENT IN THE LEACHING PROCESS OF $\text{LiCoO}_2$	242
J. Dimitrijević, S. Jevtić, A. Marinković, M. Simić, M. Koprivica, J. Petrović REMOVAL OF HEAVY METAL IONS FROM MULTIMETALLIC SOLUTION BY MODIFIED OAT STRAW	248
M.R. Rath, A.S. Patra, S. Kiran Kumar, M. Mukherjee, A. Chatterjee, A. Ranjan, A.K. Bhatnagar, A.K. Mukherjee A PROCESS TO DECREASE THE CLAY COATING OF IRON ORE LUMPS & FINES BY THE APPLICATION OF DISPERSANTS	254
H. Kurama, S. Kurama SURFACTANTS AND THEIR FUNCTIONS ON NANO-POWDER SYNTHESIS	262
A. Goryachev, D. Makarov METHODS FOR PROCESSING NATURAL AND ANTHROPOGENIC COPPER- NICKEL RAW MATERIALS IN THE ARCTIC	275
Y. Yuankun, D. Mirović DAM BREACH ANALYSIS USING HEC-RAS: A CASE STUDY OF COPPER AND GOLD "ČUKARU PEKI" MINE DAMS	283
A. Milovanović Brkić, Y. Yuankun, N. Buđelan MANAGEMENT OF FLOTATION TAILINGS AS MINING WASTE ON THE COPPER AND GOLD MINE "CUKARU PEKI"	289
N. Pavlovic, F. Palkovits, A. Hall GEO-STABLE DISPOSAL OF COAL COMBUSTION BYPRODUCTS	297
N. Pavlovic, F. Palkovits, A. Hall TAIL WAGGING THE DOG-WHY INTEGRATED SOLUTIONS ARE BETTER-TAILINGS AND BACKFILL DISPOSAL	303
V. Alivojvodic, N. Petrovnijevic POSITION OF COPPER WITHIN URBAN MINING - RECOVERING POTENTIAL FROM MINE TAILINGS	309
V.Tsitsishvili, N.Dolaberidze, N.Mirdzveli, M.Nijaradze, Z.Amiridze, B.Khutsishvili BACTERIOSTATIC ACTIVITY OF GEORGIAN HEULANDITE ENRICHED WITH BIOLOGICALLY ACTIVE METALS	315
V.Tsitsishvili, M.Panayotova, N.Dolaberidze, N.Mirdzveli, M.Nijaradze, Z.Amiridze, B.Khutsishvili, N.Jakipbekova, S.Sakibayeva THERMAL STABILITY OF NATURAL HEULANDITE-CHABAZITE MIXTURES	321
V.Tsitsishvili, M.Panayotova, N.Dolaberidze, N.Mirdzveli, M.Nijaradze, Z.Amiridze, B.Khutsishvili, N.Klarjeishvili, N.Jakipbekova COMPOSITION OF GEORGIAN AND KAZAKHSTANI NATURAL HEULANDITES	327
S. Matijašević, S. Grujić, V. Topalović, J. Stojanović, J. Nikolić, V. Savić, S. Zildžović NANOCRYSTALLIZATION OF POTASSIUM NIOBIUM GERMANATE GLASSES	333

A.C. Silva, E.M.S. Silva, P.S. Oliveira, A.F. Nascimento, A.P. Vieira Filho, D.B. Carvalho Neto ESTIMATING THE ACCURACY, PRECISION, AND RECALL OF THE HAND-SORTING OF A BRAZILIAN CHROMIUM ORE	338
V.V. Morozov, Y.P. Morozov, G. Zorigt, D. Lodoy, E. Jargalsaikhan, I.V. Pestriak SCANNING FLATBED OPTICAL ORE QUALITY ANALYZER	344
B. B. Tchouffa, N. J. Ndemou, M. G. Frida Ntsama CHARACTERIZATION, ENRICHMENT TEST AND VALORIZATION OF IRON ORE FROM NABEBA (NORTH – CONGO)	350
K. Jia, S. Đorđević, C. Ouyang, B. Lv LABORATORY BENEFICIATION TECHNOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH ON TITANIUM MAGNETITE ORE	355
D. S. Radulović, V. Jovanović, B. Ivošević, D. Todorović, S. Milićević, M. Marković INVESTIGATION OF THE POSSIBILITY OF VALORIZATION OF TWO BORATE SAMPLES FROM THE DEPOSIT "POBRĐE" – BALJEVAC	361
S. Hredzák, M. Matik, O. Šestinová, A. Zubrik, D. Kupka, S. Dolinská, I. Znamenáčková, M. Sisol, M. Marcin, L. Pašek STUDY OF ORE SAMPLES FROM THE ZLATÉ HORY DEPOSIT (HRUBÝ JESENÍK Mts., SILESIA, CZECH REPUBLIC)	367
J. Sokolović, I. Ilić, D. Krstić COMPARISON OF THE RESULTS OF SEPARATION OF DIFFERENT COALS IN THE ANTHRACITE MINE "VRSKA CUKA"	373
B.R. Reddy, K. Abhishek, J.M. Korath, M.R Rath A COMPUTATIONAL TOOL FOR PREDICTION OF JIG CONCENTRATOR OPERATING PARAMETER TO GET IMPROVED YIELD OF CONCENTRATE	379
I. Jovanović, V. Conić, D. Milanović, F. Nakhaei, S. Krstić RELATIVE PREDICTION ERROR OF FLOTATION INDICES BY ANFIS MODELS	387
Z. Štirbanović, R. Stanojlović, J. Sokolović, D. Stanujkić, N. Čirić, I. Miljanović, G. Popović APPLICATION OF VIKOR METHOD FOR SELECTION OF COLLECTOR IN PORPHYRY COPPER ORE FLOTATION	391
S. Milutinović, Lj. Obradović, S. Petrović S. Magdalinović, I. Svrkota RANKING OF FLOTATION TAILINGS POND IN EASTERN SERBIA USING THE AHP METHOD	398
I. Jovanović, V. Conić, J. Sokolović, D. Kržanović, D. Radulović SIMPLE FUZZY MODELS FOR PREDICTION OF FLOTATION INDICES	404
S. Mishra, M.H. Tyeb, A.K. Majumder DEVELOPMENT OF A VIBRATION SENSOR-BASED ONLINE MONITORING SYSTEM FOR DETECTING ROPING IN HYDROCYCLONES	410
B. Farkaš, A. Hrastov, E. Orbanic THE IMPROVEMENT OF MINERAL PROCESSING – CASE STUDY	416
T. Mohit, P. Patel, P. Kaushal, J. Sahoo, V. Arumuru, B. Deo, M. Jain, R. Manchanda IMPROVED ON-LINE FAILURE PREDICTION METHOD OF COAL INJECTION SYSTEM USED IN A SPONGE IRON ROTARY KILN	423
M. Mikić, R. Rajković, S. Trujić, D. Kržanović, M. Jovanović IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND OF THE OPEN MINE AND LANDFILLS IN SOUTH MINING DISTRICT – MAJDANPEK	429

M. Jovanović, D. Kržanović, R. Rajković, M. Mikić, M. Maksimović APPLICATION OF GEOGRIDS IN RECULTIVATION MEASURES AGAINST LAND DEGRADATION	435
V. Gardić, R. Marković, Z. Stevanović, A. Isvoran, T. Marković APPLICATION OF SUSTAINABLE CYCLING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN PHYTOREMEDIATION TECHNOLOGY OF CONTAMINATED SOILS	441
D. Đurđević-Milošević, A. Petrović, J. Elez, G. Gagula, V. Kalaba SUSTAINABLE APPROACH TO THE LACTIC ACID PRODUCTION AND ANTIBACTERIAL USE	445
B. Cekova, M. Matlievska, M. M. Puncheva, V. Velkoski, B. Kuzmanovski DIGITALIZATION OF WASTE, WAYS FOR MORE EFFICIENT WASTE MANAGEMENT	451
A. Vasileiadou, S. Zoras, A. Dimoudi INVESTIGATION OF SLAGGING CHARACTERISTICS OF INDUSTRIAL SOLID WASTES	458
A. Vasileiadou, S. Zoras, A. Dimoudi MODELLING OF CO <sub>x</sub> AND NO <sub>x</sub> EMISSIONS FROM INDUSTRIAL SOLID WASTES COMBUSTION USING ANSYS CHEMKIN PRO	464
Z. Bayer Ozturk, S. Kurama, A. Eser THE USAGE AND EFFECT OF BASALT CUTTING WASTE (BCW) IN CERAMIC GLAZE COMPOSITIONS CONTAINING OPAQUE AND MATT FRIT	470
D. Dinić, S. Stupar, N. Jovanović, M. Tanić, S. Jevtić SYNTHESIS AND CHARACTERIZATION OF POROUS CERAMICS BASED ON COPPER SLAG	480
M. Šišić, Dž. Dautbegović, M. Duraković ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SLAG FROM METALLURGICAL PLANTS IN ZENICA DISPOSED OF INDUSTRIAL WASTE LANDFILL "RACA"	486
Dz. Datubegovic, M. Hasanbasic, M. Sisic, V. Birdahic ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF THE INTRODUCTION OF LARGER CONTAINERS INTO THE WASTE COLLECTION SYSTEM IN THE CITY OF ZENICA	492
N. Bušatlić, I. Bušatlić, A. Halilović, N. Merdić, L. Kovač ENVIRONMENTALLY ACCEPTABLE CEMENTS WITH THE ADDITION OF GRANULATED BLAST FURNACE SLAG	498
A. Stojićević, M. Antić, M. Purić VEGETABLE INDUSTRY BY-PRODUCTS AS RAW MATERIALS IN FUNCTIONAL FOOD PRODUCTION	507
A. Petrović, R. Marković, D. Božić CARBON NANOTUBES AS POTENTIAL MATERIAL FOR WASTEWATER TREATMENT - A REVIEW	514
M. Marić, A. Ivković, B. Ivković, A. Janošević Ležaić, S. Uskoković-Marković, J. Savić, M. Milojević-Rakić, D. Bajuk-Bogdanović REMOVAL OF METHYLENE BLUE FROM AQUEOUS SOLUTIONS USING AN IRON-RICH SOIL	519
R. Marković, V. Gardić, R. Kovačević, Zoran Stevanović, A. Isvoran, V. Marjanović, A. Petrović BOR DISCRICT RIVERS WATERCOURSES CONTAMINATION BY Cu AND Ni IONS	524
P. Kekarjawlekar, N. Kamal, K. Maniyar, B. Deo, P. Nanda, P. Malakar, R. Manchanda DEVELOPING SAFE OPERATING PRACTICES (SOP) FOR POSTCOMBUSTION CHAMBER IN A SPONGE IRON PLANT	530

D. Milošević, M. Radosavljević, S. Polavder, Ž. Praštalo ARRANGEMENT OF FIELDS DEVASTATED BY CONSTRUCTION OF MAIN GAS PIPELINE	536
D. Đurđević-Milošević, A. Petrović, J. Elez, V. Kalaba, G. Gagula ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION THROUGH THE RATIONAL USE OF SODIUM HYPOCHLORITE AS A FUNGICIDE	542
G. Kyparissis, A. Goukoudis, G. Papadimas, E. Tasiopoulos, A. Vasileiadou CASE STUDY OF ENERGY SAVING IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL THROUGH THE INSTALLATION OF A PHOTOVOLTAIC SYSTEM ON THE ROOF	548
D. Topalović, J. Marković, M. Jović, S. Dragović, I. Smičiklas THE ARSENIC SORPTION CAPACITY OF DIFFERENT SERBIAN SOILS	554
F. Popescu, M. Zot, E.A. Laza USING SHERPA TOOL FOR ASSESSMENT OF EUROPEAN WATERBORNE TRANSPORT SECTOR IMPACT ON AIR QUALITY	560
A. Stojić, D. Tanikić, E. Požega THE IMPACT OF EXPLOITATION OF PRIMARY AND ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES ON THE ENVIRONMENT	566
A. Radojević, S. Šerbula, T. Kalinović, J. Milosavljević, J. Kalinović MOBILE PHONES – A VALUABLE COMPONENT OF E-WASTE STREAM	572
K. Janković, M. Stojanović, D. Bojović, A. Terzić, S. Stanković APPLICATION OF COAL COMBUSTION BYPRODUCTS IN SELF-COMPACTING CONCRETE: INFLUENCE ON FLOWABILITY	579
D. Radosavljević, A. Jelić, M. Stamenović IMPACT OF STUDENT MIGRATIONS ON SUSTAINABLE AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA	585
D. Radosavljević, A. Jelić, M. Stamenović DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF RECYCLABLE WASTE IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA	592
Deependra Singh SUSTAINABLE RECOVERY OF INDIAN PLACER MINERALS-THEIR DISTRIBUTION AND MINERAL ASSEMBLAGES	598
<b>ABSTRACTS</b>	<b>607</b>
M. Tasić, I. Stojković, V. Pavićević, V. Veljković SIMULATION OF HYDRODYNAMIC CAVITATION-ASSISTED BIODIESEL PRODUCTION FROM WASTE COOKING OIL USING ASPEN PLUS	609
A. Jocić, S. Marić, A. Dimitrijević RECOVERY OF METALS FROM INDUSTRIAL EFFLUENTS USING AN IONIC LIQUID-BASED STRATEGY	610
S. Marić, A. Jocić, A. Dimitrijević IONIC LIQUID-BASED TECHNOLOGY FOR METAL RECOVERY FROM ELECTRONIC WASTE	611
J. Vučićević, S. Čupić, M. Jauković, V. Đurđević, M. Stamenović, A. Božić, A. Janićijević CURRENT STATE OF THE QUALITY OF THE LUG RIVER IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF MLADENOVAC	612

D. Žnidarič THE ENERGY CRISIS AND THE EXPLOITATION OF MINERAL RESOURCES IN THE LIGHT OF INCREASING LOADS IN SPACE	613
S. Zeković A NEW GLOBAL CHALLENGES AND REGULATION FOR SUSTAINABLE SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT OF MINING	614
P.M. Angelopoulos, P. Oustadakis, G. Anastassakis, M. Georgiou, N. Kountouris HYDROTHERMAL TREATMENT OF BAUXITE RESIDUE FOR IRON RECOVERY ENHANCEMENT BY MAGNETIC SEPARATION	615
O. Ayoglu, M. Sinche-Gonzalez, M. Moilanen TEXTURAL MINERALOGICAL UNDERSTANDING OF MAGNETITE LIBERATION CONTAINING COPPER INCLUSIONS	616
M. Sinche-Gonzalez MASTER IN MINERAL PROCESING (EMJM-PROMISE) IN THE CONTEXT OF DEMAND OF CRITICAL MATERIALS AND ENERGY TRANSITION	617
<b>ADVERTISING MATERIALS</b>	<b>619</b>
Department for Mineral and Recycling Technologies	621
Serbia Zijin Mining	624
Serbia Zijin Copper	627
Analysis d.o.o.	629
tozero	631
Monicom	632
EMJM-PROMISE	633

## COMPARISON OF THE RESULTS OF SEPARATION OF DIFFERENT COALS IN THE ANTHRACITE MINE "VRSKA CUKA"

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**ABSTRACT** – This paper presents the comparative results of the study of the efficiency of the separation of coal in the anthracite mine "Vrska Cuka". Industrial and laboratory tests of the possibility of gravity separation were carried out with the aim of verifying the sharpness of the separation in the process of coal separation, as well as assessing its impact on the technological indicators of the process. Parallel research was carried out on two different samples of raw coal: from the anthracite mine "Vrska Cuka" and the lignite mine "Lubnica". The Ecart probable values are  $E_p=97.5 \text{ kg/m}^3$  and  $40 \text{ kg/m}^3$ , respectively. Such results only confirm the fact that grain size affects the value of  $E_p$ , that is, that coarser-grained products are separated better, more efficiently than finer-grained products.

**Keywords:** Vrska Cuka, Lubnica, Gravity Separation, Coal.

### INTRODUCTION

Anthracite mine "Vrska Cuka" Avramica is located about 10 km from Zajecar in eastern Serbia. The mine has a modern separation that was completed in 1994. The industrial plant comprises of a complex technological process for gravity and flotation concentration of raw coal. Size fractions over 0.5 mm are treated by dense-medium processes, whereas flotation has been proposed for sizes finer than 0.5 mm [1].

The gravitational concentration of coal is carried out in the two-part separator "BSRI - 1200" with a spiral and electromagnetic valve for separating the sink fraction. In this device for separation, two different size fractions of anthracite coal can be treated at the same time, namely: (- 30 + 5) and (- 5 + 0.5) mm [1,2]. In the separation plant, lignite with different characteristics from the Lubnica mine is washed, too. The aim of this study is to perform a comparative analysis of the results of separation of different coals. Research was carried out on two different samples of raw coal: from the anthracite mine "Vrska Cuka" and the lignite mine "Lubnica".

### EXPERIMENTAL

The samples for experimental tests were collected from separation process in the anthracite mine "Vrska Cuka". As in the separation of the "Vrska Cuka" anthracite mine, different coal assortments from the "Lubnica" mine are washed, the samples from the "Lubnica" mine were collected in the same way and from the same sampling points from the coal separation plant [3].

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The particle size analysis by size fractions and the float-sink analysis by density fractions were performed in order to characterize the raw coal. The laboratory float-sink analysis were performed on the raw coal and all products (float and sink products) of coal separation. The analysis was performed using an inorganic heavy liquid (solutions of  $ZnCl_2$  of density ranging from from 1300 to 1850  $kg/m^3$ ). All obtained size fractions and density fractions were analyzed on the ash content.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Particle size analysis

The particle size analysis and ash content in size fractions of raw coal from the "Vrska Cuka" and "Lubnica" are given in Table 1.

**Table 1** Particle size distribution of raw coal [3]

Particle size d (mm)	Vrska Cuka		Lubnica	
	Mass %	Ash %	Mass %	Ash %
+30	0.00	0.00	1.63	67.24
-30+15	10.66	40.01	61.58	39.41
-15+10	29.09	41.71	28.80	32.75
-10+5	21.38	41.12	2.96	38.87
-5+0	38.87	33.49	5.03	52.42
$\Sigma$	100.00		100.00	

The results of the analysis of the particle size distribution of the raw coal sample from the "Lubnica" mine show that this sample is significantly coarser-grained compared to the raw coal from the "Vrska Cuka" anthracite mine, and that in this sample there are dominant participation of coarse size classes, even particles with a size above 30 mm.

### Float-Sink analyses

The results of float-sink analysis of a raw coal from anthracite mine "Vrska Cuka" as well as products of separation (separation coal as float fraction and tailing as sink fraction) are shown in Table 2 [3].

**Table 2** Float-sink analysis of a raw coal and products of separation of coal from anthracite mine "Vrska Cuka"

Specific gravity $kg/m^3$	Raw coal (feed) (%)		Separated coal (float) (%)		Tailing (sink) (%)	
	Mass %	Ash %	Mass %	Ash %	Mass %	Ash %
-1300	6.19	6.79	4.78	3.38	0.38	3.82
-1400	27.37	9.83	40.50	3.77	11.37	4.48
-1500	8.57	18.20	17.63	13.00	4.31	14.64
-1600	7.64	34.00	9.58	24.16	3.40	25.47
-1700	8.85	40.29	5.07	29.13	3.81	32.15
-1850	10.86	53.64	2.95	41.32	3.77	40.62
+1850	30.51	68.82	19.49	80.07	72.96	80.91
$\Sigma$	100.00		100.00		100.00	

By separation of raw anthracite coal, it can be noticed that depending on the quality, in the range of separation densities between 1400 and 1800 kg/m<sup>3</sup>, the mass yield of the float coal is from 34% to 65%. For instance, the separation of raw coal on the density 1600 kg/m<sup>3</sup>, it can be achieved mass yield of coal,  $l_m = 49.78\%$  with average ash content,  $p = 14.60\%$ .

Based on the results, it can be seen that the fractions below 1500 kg/m<sup>3</sup> have a significant mass share of about 63% with an ash content of 8.68% in the separated coal product.

The fraction above 1850 kg/m<sup>3</sup>, with the largest mass share in tailings (sinking product) which is 72.96% and with an ash content of 80.91%. The results of float-sink analysis of a raw coal from lignite mine "Lubnica" as well as products of separation by the density fractions are shown in Table 3 [3].

**Table 3** Float-sink analysis of a raw coal and products of separation of coal from lignite mine "Lubnica"

Specific gravity kg/m <sup>3</sup>	Raw coal (feed) (%)		Separated coal (float) (%)		Tailing (sink) (%)	
	Mass %	Ash %	Mass %	Ash %	Mass %	Ash %
-1300	23.95	10.75	51.66	8.78	0.77	13.23
-1400	11.90	20.01	32.25	19.40	2.73	23.27
-1500	29.96	40.76	11.78	41.01	4.72	41.39
-1600	11.48	54.83	3.41	55.59	20.96	57.40
-1700	4.25	57.87	0.82	56.54	23.52	64.05
-1850	12.20	63.43	0.08	52.74	30.93	73.99
+1850	6.26	73.51	0.00	0.00	16.37	82.02
Σ	100.00		100.00		100.00	

The float-sink analysis of the raw lignite coal shows a low degree of separability for the tested raw material, the mass yield at a density of 1400 kg/m<sup>3</sup> is 35.80%. The ash content at this density is about 14%.

The results of float-sink analysis of the sample of separated coal show that the fraction -1300 kg/m<sup>3</sup>, which amounts to 51.66%, is dominant in this product. The ash content in this fraction is about 9%.

#### Determination of separation efficiency

The partition or distribution curve is useful in assessing the efficiency or sharpness of the coal separation [5]. The partition curve or Tromp curve (introduced by Tromp in 1937) is obtained by plotting the partition coefficient against the mean of its density range [6].

The separation density or cut point ( $\rho_{50}$ ) and the probable error of separation ( $E_p$ ) can both be calculated from the partition curve [5].

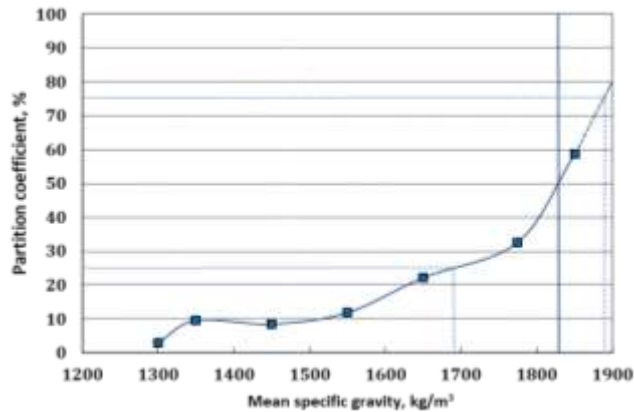
The probable error of separation ( $E_p$ ) is defined as half the difference between the S.G. where 75% is recovered in the sinks and the S.G. at which 25% is recovered in the sinks [5].

The mass yield was calculated using the Grumbrecht method. Figure 1 and Table 4 show the results.

**Table 4** Calculation of mass yield of Grumbrecht methods – Vrska Cuka

Specific gravity	Feed raw coal (%)	Separation coal (float) (%)	Tailing (sink) (%)				
kg/m <sup>3</sup>	U	K	J	U - J	K - J	(U - J) (K - J)	(K - J) <sup>2</sup>
-1300	6.19	4.78	0.38	5.81	4.40	25.58	19.36
-1400	27.37	40.50	11.37	16.00	29.13	466.16	848.56
-1500	8.57	17.63	4.31	4.26	13.32	56.79	177.42
-1600	7.64	9.58	3.40	4.24	6.18	26.19	38.19
-1700	8.85	5.07	3.81	5.04	1.26	6.36	1.59
-1850	10.86	2.95	3.77	7.09	-0.82	-5.81	0.67
+1850	30.51	19.49	72.96	-42.45	-53.47	2269.85	2859.04
Σ	100.00	100.00	100.00			2845.12	3925.47

$$Im = \frac{2845.12}{3925.47} \cdot 100 = 72.48\% \quad (1)$$



**Figure 1** Partition curve for gravity separation of raw coal from the anthracite mine "Vrska Cuka" [3]

From the partition curve, the separation density or  $\rho_{50}$  is 1835 kg/m<sup>3</sup>. The probable error of separation or the Ecart probable ( $E_p$ ) is expressed as:

$$E_p = \frac{\rho_{75} - \rho_{25}}{2} = \frac{1890 - 1695}{2} = 97.5 \text{ kg/m}^3 \quad (2)$$

Table 5 compares theoretical and practical data for the gravity separation of raw coal from the "Vrska Cuka" anthracite mine.

**Table 5** Compared theoretic and industrial values for gravity separation of raw coal

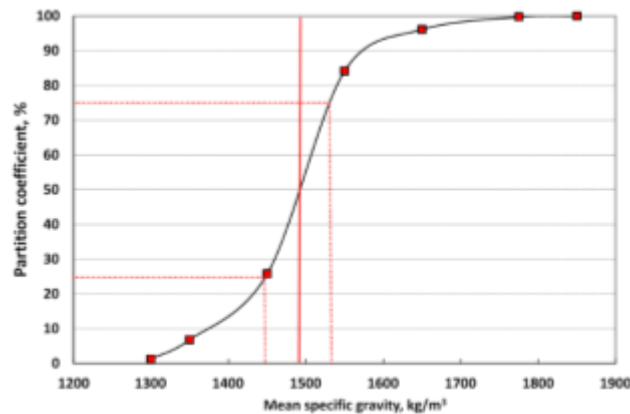
	Theoretic values	Industrial values
Mass yield (wt. %)	68.40	72.48
Average ash (%)	23.51	24.60
$\rho_p$ (kg/m <sup>3</sup> )	1835	1835
$E_p$ (kg/m <sup>3</sup> )	0	97.5

The results of the calculation of mass yield of Grumbrecht methods as well as partition curve for gravity separation of raw coal from the lignite mine "Lubnica" are shown in Table 6 and Figure 2.

**Table 6** Calculation of mass yield of Grumbrecht methods – Lubnica

Specific gravity	Feed raw coal (%)	Separation coal (float) (%)	Tailing (sink) (%)				
kg/m <sup>3</sup>	U	K	J	U - J	K - J	(U - J) (K - J)	(K - J) <sup>2</sup>
-1300	23.95	51.66	0.77	23.18	50.89	1179.58	2589.79
-1400	11.90	32.25	2.73	9.17	29.52	270.71	871.43
-1500	29.96	11.78	4.72	25.24	7.06	178.23	49.84
-1600	11.48	3.41	20.96	-9.48	-17.55	166.40	308.00
-1700	4.25	0.82	23.52	-19.27	-22.70	437.45	515.29
-1850	12.20	0.08	30.93	-18.73	-30.85	577.94	951.72
+1850	6.26	0.00	16.37	-10.11	-16.37	165.46	267.98
Σ	100.00	100.00	100.00			2975.76	5554.06

$$Im = \frac{2975.76}{5554.06} \cdot 100 = 53.58\% \quad (3)$$



**Figure 2** Partition curve for gravity separation of raw coal from the lignite mine "Lubnica" [3]

From the partition curve, the separation density or  $\rho_{50}$  is 1490 kg/m<sup>3</sup>. The probable error of separation or the Ecart probable ( $E_p$ ) is expressed as:

$$E_p = \frac{\rho_{75} - \rho_{25}}{2} = \frac{1530 - 1450}{2} = 40 \text{ kg/m}^3 \quad (4)$$

Table 7 compares theoretical and practical data for the gravity separation of raw coal from the "Lubnica" lignite mine.

**Table 7** Compared theoretic and industrial values for gravity separation of raw coal

	Theoretic values	Industrial values
Mass yield (wt. %)	62.81	53.58
Average ash (%)	25.39	18.02
$\rho_p$ (kg/m <sup>3</sup> )	1490	1490
$E_p$ (kg/m <sup>3</sup> )	0	40

## CONCLUSION

In this paper are shown results of the parallel research conducted on two different samples of raw coal: from the anthracite mine "Vrska Cuka" and the lignite mine "Lubnica". The achieved results in the process of separation of coal from the "Vrska Cuka" anthracite mine are as follows: mass yield is 72.48%, while the average ash content in the separated coal is 24.60%. It was determined that the separation density is  $\rho_p=1835$  kg/m<sup>3</sup>. The probable error of separation or the Ecart probable ( $E_p$ ) value is  $E_p=97.5$  kg/m<sup>3</sup>, confirming that the technological process of coal separation works with a reduced sharpness of separation.

Based on the results obtained in the lignite coal separation process, it can be concluded that the separation efficiency was better. The Ecart probable ( $E_p$ ) is 40 kg/m<sup>3</sup>. At a density of 1490 kg/m<sup>3</sup>, the mass yield is 53.58% with an ash content of 18.02% in the separated coal. Such results only confirm the fact that grain size affects the value of  $E_p$ , that is, that coarser-grained lignite coal are separated better, more efficiently and with significantly greater precision than finer-grained anthracite coal.

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