

A member of the EU Parliament came to Norway on a business trip to visit Norge Mining: - I came to see a good example



EU VISIT: Manuel Ramao from Norge Mining here gives Anna-Michelle Asimakopoulou, member of the EU Parliament, a detailed explanation of how the test drilling works. To DT, the member of parliament says that she thinks it was very useful to see how the practical implementation of the investigations in the area works

Foto: Ingunnn Walderhaug
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[Ingunn Walderhaug](#)

The war in Ukraine has turned Norge Mining's strategies on their heads. They can no longer just think shop, they also have to think politics. It can be a good shop out of it, too.

Norge Mining has always argued for the potential mining in Dalane by pointing out that the minerals they want to extract are in strong demand in Europe. Titanium, vanadium and phosphorus are all on the list of so-called "critical raw materials". And Norge Mining estimates that there are more than 70 billion tonnes of ore in the area containing these materials. It has always been a basis for a good shop, that is, according to them themselves. Now, after Russia has invaded Ukraine and it has become a war for resources, the EU's work to ensure self-sufficiency within Europe has been put into high gear. And Norge Mining has seen its cut and really put in the effort to make central figures in Europe aware of the opportunities in Dalane

On Thursday this week, EU Member of Parliament Anna-Michelle Asimakopoulou came to Eigersund and Lund. The goal was to see with their own eyes what opportunities exist in the rock in Dalane - and take their reports to Brussels and the EU.

Rather Norway than China

Asimakopoulou has a large entourage with her, both from her own apparatus and people from Norge Mining. Board member of Norge Mining, Ingvil Smines Tybring-Gjedde, is involved. There is also Tormod Andreassen from the Business Association in the Stavanger region. They are at Skeipstad in Hetlandsheia, and have just demonstrated a test drilling.

On her way over a gravel path, surrounded by mountains, forests, cultural landscapes and scattered farms, Asimakopoulou explains why she has taken the long trip to visit Norge Mining.

- I came here to see a good example before the project really gets started, she says - and elaborates:

- I think the war and the pandemic have made it clear that Europe must think geopolitically about its strategic autonomy. When you have to carry out a green shift and a digital development, you need these critical raw materials. Today, I think 90 percent of them are imported from China, but it is important for Europe to develop strategic partnerships with businesses in countries where there is respect for human rights, comments Asimakopoulou.



SKEIPSTAD: På Skeipstad på Hetlandsheia foregår det nå prøveboringer i regi av Norge Mining. Så langt har selskapet fullført 115 prøveboringer. Foto: Ingunn Walderhaug

Innom rådhuset først

Besøket handler i stor grad om å ta med seg lærdom om mulighetene i europeisk gruvedrift. Parlamentsmedlemmet var derfor ikke bare invitert for å få se nærmere på prøveboringene i områdene mellom Helleland og Ualand. Dagen startet med et møte i rådhuset i Eigersund, med varaordfører Leif Erik Egaas og kommunedirektør Siri A. Meling.

– Denne dagen handler om hele prosessen, om bærekraft og naturinngrep, og ikke minst om samarbeidet med lokale myndigheter. Det er i et tidlig stadium, men inntrykket mitt er at det er seriøse og siviliserte diskusjoner mellom alle aktørene, sier Asimakopoulou.

– Ting er endret nå

Direktør i Norge Mining, John Vergopoulos, har tidligere uttalt seg til Dalane Tidende om [hvordan krigen i Ukraina har rettet søkelyset mot prosjekter av den typen de selv har startet i Dalane.](#)

Nå sier han at det er «ekstremt viktig» at Asimakopoulou har kommet på besøk.

– Normalt vil et gruveselskap grave, prosessere og selge. Ting er endret nå. Etter 24. februar har vi måttet jobbe med EU, Norge og lokale myndigheter på en annen måte. Vi må sikre en uavhengig verdikjede, ved å undersøke hva vi kan produsere innenfor egne grenser, nå som Russland bruker varer som våpen, sier han.

Europa er helt avhengige av å skape en robust og motstandsdyktig verdikjede, ifølge Vergopoulos.

– Og vi kan ikke lenger jobbe alene. Vi må jobbe med EU. Vi kan ikke lenger gjøre en avtale som er finansielt viktig for oss, men som viser seg å ikke være riktig for Norge eller for EU.

Visit at the city hall first

The visit is largely about learning about the opportunities in European mining. The member of parliament was therefore not only invited to take a closer look at the test drilling in the areas between Helleland and Ualand. The day started with a meeting in the town hall in Eigersund, with deputy mayor Leif Erik Egaas and municipal director Siri A. Meling.

- This day is about the whole process, about sustainability and natural interventions, and not least about the cooperation with local authorities. It is at an early stage, but my impression is that there are serious and civilized discussions between all the actors, says Asimakopoulou.

- Things have changed now

Director of Norge Mining, John Vergopoulos, has previously spoken to Dalane Tidende about how the war in Ukraine has focused the spotlight on projects of the type they themselves have started in Dalane.

Now he says that it is "extremely important" that Asimakopoulou has come to visit.

- Normally, a mining company will dig, process and sell. Things have changed now. After 24 February, we have had to work with the EU, Norway and local authorities in a different way. We must ensure an independent value chain, by examining what we can produce within our own borders, now that Russia is using goods as weapons, he says. Europe is completely dependent on creating a robust and resilient value chain, according to Vergopoulos.

- And we can no longer work alone. We must work with the EU. We can no longer make an agreement that is financially important to us, but which turns out not to be right for Norway or the EU.



SKEIPSTAD FRAMFOR OSLO: Norway Mining director John Vergopoulos (left) says that it is very important for the company to receive a visit from the EU. - And it is important for the local community that she comes here to see what is happening, rather than if we had a meeting in Oslo, says founder and owner of Norge Mining, Michael Wurmser (right). In the middle is operations director Monika Øksnes. Photo: Ingunn Walderhaug