

BULGARIAN AIR POLLUTION

In Bulgaria the air pollution indices are 55 micrograms per cubic meter, while in the rest of the European Union countries the average is 30.

The high degree of pollution in Bulgaria is due to the number of cars on the road without a catalytic converter: located in the exhaust of the car and also called a catalytic converter, it is a device that converts the toxic gases produced by the engine into less harmful substances.

In addition, the air in Bulgaria suffers the consequences resulting from the lack of controls that restrict the importation of second-hand cars from countries in the western part of the continent.

European regulations establish that there are health risks when the population is exposed to a concentration of nitrogen dioxide greater than 200 micrograms per cubic meter in one hour. And big cities like Madrid, London, Paris, Tokyo or Bogota surpass them.

We are talking about cities of several million inhabitants with millions of other private vehicles and daily commutes. And yet Pernik, a Bulgarian city of about 100,000 inhabitants, in 2013 had the most polluted air in the European Union and is still considered one of the dirtiest today. How is it possible that it is worse than that of the capital, Sofia, with a population of over a million people and an infinitely larger fleet of cars? The answer is coal.

COAL. THE DOOM OF PERNIK

Pernik was a town doomed to grow. Located on a coal deposit so close to the surface, its extraction seemed simple and cheap a hundred years ago, when the galleries that today cross its roots began to be excavated. In the middle of the 20th century, the communist government thought that it was the perfect enclave to build an industrial city.



It had the raw material to supply the factories and its location was perfect, 30 kilometers from the capital and close to the border with the former Yugoslavia. It soon began to grow and became an industrial benchmark, but with the fall of communism and the change in economic trends, the factories disappeared and the job offer fell, so citizens began to leave to look for work.

