Dr. Jelena Cvejanov Editor

University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Technology Journal of the Serbian Chemical Society

Bulevar cara Lazara 1

21000 Novi Sad

Serbia

Tel.: +381 21 4853673

Email: cvejanov@tf.uns.ac.rs

Dear Editor,

Thank you very much for your decision letter.

Please find below the list of changes made in accordance to the reviewers’ comments.

Yours sincerely,

 Jelena Cvejanov

In Novi Sad, March 02 2017

**Changes made in the manuscript according to the reviewers’comments**

**Reviewer A**

*> Lines 1-2: The title should be modified to more accurately reflect the*

*> major findings reported in the manuscript.*

The title is corrected into: **Application of principal component and hierarchical cluster analyses in classification of the Serbian bottled waters and the comparison with waters from some European countries**

*> Lines 23-24: (1) the term 'main ions' should be replaced by more*

*> specific one; (2) 'European countries' seems to be not appropriate*

*> keyword since data from Cameroon are also analyzed in the paper.*

The mentioned terms previously listed as keywords are changed into: chemometrics; anions (Cl-, SO42-, HCO3-); cations (Ca2+, Mg2+, Na+, K+); total dissolved solids

*> Lines 66-67: This sentence (from the Instruction for Authors) should*

*> be deleted.*

The sentence is deleted.

*> Line 70: The details on three analytical methods given in the first*

*> sentence of the abstract (instruments, QA/QC etc.) are missing.*

The brief description of the analytical methods is given as follows:

2nd paragraph in EXPERIMENTAL

For majority of the waters (coded 1-26, Table I), the data on major ions were taken from the manufacturers’ labels, while analytical results obtained elsewhere15 were taken for additional 7 brands (coded 27-11, Table I). These analytical results were obtained by different techniques:15,16 contents of Ca2+, Mg2+, Na+, and K+ were determined by inductively coupled plasma atomic emission spectroscopy (with the respective limits of detection in mg L-1: 0.005, 0.005, 0.02 and 0.05), Cl- and SO42- by ion chromatography (with the limits of detection 0.01 mg L-1 for both anions) and HCO3- by the titration (alkalinity) method (with the limit of detection 1 mg L-1); the repeatability of the measurements was acceptable (below 5%). Good agreement between the values reported on the labels and the analytical results was found by random comparison of data for the same brands.

*> Lines 133-135: A short discussion of these results with respect of*

*> geological settings of Serbia should be useful for readers.*

As requested the following short discussion on geological settings of Serbia is included:

page 6, the last sentence in the 1st paragraph of the Results and Discussion section

This is in accordance to the most prevailing types of mineral waters in the large geotectonic units present in Serbia: HCO3-Na type in Pannonian Basin; HCO3-Na or HCO3-Ca-Mg type in Dinarides; HCO3-Na-Cl or HCO3-Na-SO4-Cl in Serbian-Macedonian Massif; HCO3-Ca or HCO3-Na-SO4-Cl type in Carpatho-Balkanides.24

*> Figure 3: The figure quality should be improved especially at the axis labels.*

Following the comment and suggestion of the Reviewer B, Fig.3 is deleted, while presenting those data as new Table (now Table III, page 11 in the corrected manuscript)

*> Lines 285 and 289: The source title is missing.*

The title of the journal is included: *J. Geochemical Explor.*

**Reviewer B**

*> 1. At first, the title must be changed to be more concise but still*

*> informative enough in regard to the conducted study. In the same*

*> sense, authors are advised to select other words in „keywords“, not*

*> repeating those from the title.*

The title is corrected into: **Application of principal component and hierarchical cluster analyses in classification of the Serbian bottled waters and the comparison with waters from some European countries**

The new keywords are: chemometrics; anions (Cl-, SO42-, HCO3-); cations (Ca2+, Mg2+, Na+, K+); total dissolved solids

*> 2. It is strange to select Cameroon as only one out-of-Europe*

*> country. If there are no special reasons for that authors are suggested to discard*

*> those data. I assume that repeated chemometrics evaluation (MUST BE*

*> DONE) wont affect already obtained conclusions. Apart of that, the*

*> selection of other countries is excellent.*

Firstly, all relevant results from literature were gathered and analyzed not taking into account common geographical origin, but in accordance to the reviewer’s comment about the countries selection, we refined the results taking into account just „European“ origin of the waters and the newly obtained results are presented in the corrected manuscript.

*> 3. Lines 66-67: to discard the sentence „The introduction should*

*> include the aim of the research and a concise description of background*

*> information and related studies directly connected to the paper.“*

As mentioned, this sentence is deleted.

*> 4. The obtined results are based on measurements by inductively*

*> coupled plasma atomic emission spectroscopy, ion chromatography and titration*

*> but, there are no data on instrumental and operating conditions. The*

*> experimental part must be rewritten to enable readers to reproduce the*

*> conducted analysis.*

As mentioned, the brief description of the analytical methods is given as follows:

2nd paragraph in EXPERIMENTAL

For majority of the waters (coded 1-26, Table I), the data on major ions were taken from the manufacturers’ labels, while analytical results obtained elsewhere15 were taken for additional 7 brands (coded 27-11, Table I). These analytical results were obtained by different techniques:15,16 contents of Ca2+, Mg2+, Na+, and K+ were determined by inductively coupled plasma atomic emission spectroscopy (with the respective limits of detection in mg L-1: 0.005, 0.005, 0.02 and 0.05), Cl- and SO42- by ion chromatography (with the limits of detection 0.01 mg L-1 for both anions) and HCO3- by the titration (alkalinity) method (with the limit of detection 1 mg L-1); the repeatability of the measurements was acceptable (below 5%). Good agreement between the values reported on the labels and the analytical results was found by random comparison of data for the same brands.

*> 5. In regard to my previous comment, the validation of used*

*> analytical methods data are needed.*

Please, see the previous explanation.

*> 6. Figure 3 is not clear/informative at all. Authors advised to*

*> reconsider presentation of HCA results in format of Table.*

Fig.3 is deleted, while presenting those data as new Table (now Table III in the corrected manuscript).

*> 7. Thorough and professional English review is mandatory.*

As requested thorough and professional review of the English language was performed.