

## PRESS RELEASE

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### LIBERTY Ostrava drives away with the world's longest Tatra vehicle

**LIBERTY Ostrava is now the proud owner of one of Europe's longest vehicles, which is more than 25 metres long, all so that it can better support its customers across Europe. The steelworks has been trialling a new Tatra vehicle since October to help it transport 24 metre long threaded bars, far too long for normal vehicles. The vehicle is the longest in the history of the Koprivnice-based Tatra car maker. The special Tatra undercarriage was further developed by another regional company, Partner Ipex, according to its own specialist technical design.**

The need for a special vehicle arose in the Ostrava mill when it was decided early last year to transfer the finishing section of the threaded bars and their accessories from Luxembourg to Ostrava. The move was part of the plant's decision to increase its production of higher added value products. The vehicle, along with other technologies such as special saws, was part of a EUR 3.3 million investment to allow the Ostrava mill to carry out threaded bars finishing.

*"Bars of the final length reaching up to 24.2 m are rolled at our Medium Section Mill. Now they can also be processed further at our Threaded Bars Service Centre of the Ostrava mill. We have ordered a unique vehicle for their transport between these two operations because standard trucks are only able to carry products with maximum length of 13.6 meters. The final products will continue to be transported to customers by railway cars as in the past,"* explained head of the Threaded Bars Service Centre of LIBERTY Ostrava Pavel Suchánek.

The unique car is 25.3 m long, is equipped with a 300 kW Tatra engine and an Allison automated gear box. Partner Ipex have added an extra axle to the original six axles of the Tatra's undercarriage model Tatra Force, which is used primarily for vehicles used in mining and by integrated rescue forces. This means the vehicle now has the total load capacity of 70 tonnes. The vehicle complies with all traffic code parameters but it is not expected to drive outside the company premises.

The adjustments carried out by Partner Ipex from Frenštát pod Radhoštěm took about ten months to complete despite the difficulties caused by Covid-19 and the unstable situation in the automotive sector. Like the undercarriage and the adjustments, most of the sub-deliveries of the required components were provided by manufacturers from the Moravian-Silesian region.

*"We are happy to have worked on such an interesting and unique project for LIBERTY Ostrava and were able to use our long-term know-how of Tatra truck adjustments. I would like to thank Tatra Trucks for the timely production and delivery of the undercarriage and for a close cooperation with the special adjustments. I am proud of our technicians and engineers who were able to come up with a technical solution which enabled us to meet the requirements of the Ostrava mill related to the*

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specific use of the vehicle in internal traffic within the company premises,” said Vojtěch Svoboda, sales director of Partner Ipex.

TATRA TRUCKS as the manufacturer of the undercarriage have appreciated the opportunity to showcase another way of use of the Tatra vehicles, which are generally considered to be used in difficult terrains.

„LIBERTY Ostrava, one of the leading steelmakers in the Czech Republic and part of the international GFG Alliance, is a precious customer reference for us and an example that Tatra vehicles are suitable for various roles. Traditionally, Tatras are perceived as vehicles for difficult terrain, but in this case another unique feature was emphasised: the possibility to adjust the undercarriage for extremely long loads,” added Kamil Košťál, the marketing director of TATRA TRUCKS.

The mill looked for an experienced driver of this exceptionally long vehicle for more than half a year before finding Jiří Soldán, who had previously worked as a driver of special military vehicles in the Czech Army. Jiří liked the opportunity to sit down behind the wheel of the world’s longest Tatra truck.

“It is a challenge to drive such a vehicle. I have had to drive through the mill a couple of times to find the way I can easily go through. I have to remember that the rear part could get out of the road when making a wider turn. It gives me a hard time when I need to go past the waiting cars at the dispatch area. But thanks to the five controlled axles this giant is surprisingly easy to control,” said Jiří Soldán.

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**LIBERTY Ostrava** is an integrated steel business with an annual production capacity of approximately 3.6 million tonnes per annum serving primarily construction, machinery and oil & gas industries. The company is a domestic leader in the manufacture of road barriers and tubes. In addition to the Czech market, it supplies its products to more than 40 countries around the world. Together with its subsidiaries in Ostrava, the company has 6,000 employees. The company manufactures its products with a minimum possible environmental footprint. The mill is part of LIBERTY Steel Group.

**LIBERTY Steel Group** is part of GFG Alliance, a collection of global businesses and investments owned by Sanjeev Gupta and his family. The Alliance is structured into three core industrial pillars: LIBERTY Steel Group, ALVANCE Aluminium Group and SIMEC Energy Group, independent of each other yet united through shared values and a purpose to create a sustainable future for industry and society. GFG Alliance employs c.35,000 people, across 30 countries and has revenues of >USD \$20bn.

**Partner Ipex** is an authorised dealer of Tatra trucks. It secures sale and service of vehicles and sales of spare parts of this make. This family business specializes in tailored-made adjustments of Tatra vehicles, their constructions, revamps, overhauls or modernizations. Partner Ipex is part of Ipex Group, founded by Dalibor Petr in 1990.

Joint-stock company **TATRA TRUCKS** acquired a world-known automotive company based in Koprivnice in 2013, which has gone through a successful restructuring after the change of its ownership structure. Besides the standardised model lines it also produces special tailor-made trucks. 80 per cent of its output is exported. Tatra Trucks has more than 1000 employees and its subsidiary Tatra Metalurgie, foundry and forging business, employees another 600 people.

[www.libertyostrava.cz](http://www.libertyostrava.cz)

[www.libertysteelgroup.com](http://www.libertysteelgroup.com)

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