

PRESS RELEASE

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Revamp worth almost a billion crowns at LIBERTY Ostrava to improve the reliability and ensure sustainability of its hot strip mill

LIBERTY Ostrava is undertaking extensive modifications worth almost a billion crowns (EUR 33 million) to its hot strip mill, the only producer of hot rolled strip steel in the Czech Republic. The replacement of many technological parts by the end of 2023 with more modern ones will improve the reliability and sustainability of the operation of the plant's Steckel mill, ensure the desired quality of its products and increase its capacity utilization to more than 1 million tonnes.

The hot strip rolling mill, otherwise known as the Steckel Mill, revamp is taking place in several stages due to the long lead times of spare parts and the durations required for the repair. The programme started this spring and will last until the end of 2023. After this year's shutdown in November, 1,400 existing hydraulic elements were replaced by more modern ones. Next May, further modifications will include the installation of two X-ray thickness gauges, the replacement of furnace coilers and cooling towers of laminar cooling. The automation program, which provides model control of the mill will also be modernized allowing more accurate prediction of rolling forces and temperatures.

Consequently, in 2023, functional blocks of bending in stands as well as hydraulic capsules will be replaced by more modern components. In parallel, the functions of the mill's descalers, frits and roll cooling mechanisms will be improved. An equally important part of the program will be the gradual replacement of all auxiliary regulated drives on the track. In the spring and autumn of 2023, the installation of new the technological elements will require at least a two-week shutdown of the mill.

Sambit Beborta, Director of Technology for LIBERTY Steel Group Europe, who is leading the team responsible for the project's preparation, said: *"This important investment will increase the quality of LIBERTY Ostrava's steel strips as well as the reliability and efficiency of the rolling mill and enable us to produce over 1 million tonnes of flat products per year."*

Jan Pudich, Director of the hot strip mill in LIBERTY Ostrava added: *"The implementation of the range of individual upgrades will improve the mechanical properties of the hot rolled strip, remove surface defects and ensure precise adherence to its geometric shape. This will allow us to offer our Czech and international customers even better quality strips as and when they need it."*

The Steckel mill was built in the 1990s as a completely new operation and at that time, the Ostrava steelworks was the first facility in Europe to implement the technology of strip production from liquid steel. On one side of the 200-meter-long hall liquid steel in ladles is transferred directly from the steel shop, on the other side the already coiled and strapped steel strips are transported. The production takes place in a relatively small space and the whole process takes about two hours. The advantage of the Ostrava steelworks' Steckel mill is a high degree of flexibility, so the operation is economic even with a low annual production volume, which allows the company to respond to market requirements in a flexible way.

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Note to the editors:

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.

GFG Alliance is 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 35,000 people, across 10 countries and has revenues of USD \$20bn. GFG Alliance is a leader in sustainable industry with a mission to become Carbon Neutral by 2030 (CN30).

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