

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LIBERTY Ostrava restarts Blast Furnace no. 2 following maintenance upgrades

- Restart of Blast Furnace No. 2 highlights the flexibility of the LIBERTY Ostrava business
- CZK 44 million of repairs to the Blast Furnace carried out during the shutdown period

After almost a four-month shutdown, LIBERTY Ostrava has restarted Blast Furnace No. 2 following essential repairs worth more than CZK 44 million to upgrade and modernise the furnace, which started its first campaign almost 70 years ago. The restart highlights the ability of the LIBERTY Ostrava business to flex its operations in line with market demand.

Pascal Genest, CEO of LIBERTY Ostrava, said: “The temporary shutdown of the furnace allowed us to respond flexibly to the slump in steel demand due to the coronavirus pandemic and to reduce the metal inventory built for the start of the construction season. We are very pleased that the repairs have been carried out successfully and that we have been able to deliver on our commitment to restart the furnace by the end of August. The ability to manage the Blast Furnace in this way highlights the plant’s flexibility, which will help the business as it looks to improve its long term economic and environmental sustainability.”

After the furnace had cooled down for 40 days, from its normal 2,300 °C operating temperature, an extensive repair programme started. This programme included the replacement of the cooling piping, the modernization of the furnace cooling system as well as minor repairs to the hot-blast stoves, charging machines, skip tracks and the dust collector. A number of companies from the across the region, such as KADAMO, Stavby OMO, Hutní montáže Slovakia, and Speciální výškové práce – Roland Babka, supported the LIBERTY Ostrava team in effecting the repairs.

In line with an old steelmakers’ tradition, the Chief Smelter ignited the burners of the Blast Furnace with a torch lit by the fire from the other Blast Furnace. Václav Habura, Chief Operation Officer at LIBERTY

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Ostrava, explained: "The first tapping of hot metal will follow after about 20 hours of the restart, and it will take a few days for the furnace to produce hot metal which can be used for steelmaking."

Blast Furnace no. 2, which is 35 meters high and whose structure measures 70 meters, was first lit on October 1, 1952. It can produce up to 3,200 tonnes of hot metal per day.

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Note to Editors:

LIBERTY Ostrava is an integrated steel business with an annual production capacity of approximately 3.6 million tonnes per annum serving 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.

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 10 countries and has revenues of >USD \$20bn.

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