

PRESS RELEASE

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The steam locomotive operation in the Ostrava steelworks ended 50 years ago

On 22 January 1971 the steam locomotive operation was ended in the Ostrava steelworks. At that time, the mill then called Nová huť operated nearly 50 steam powered locomotives which served for the railway transport of the material at the mill. Gradually, they were replaced by diesel locos. The last steam loco is displayed near the South gate at the mill.

The steam locos were used within the mill's premises for material transport until 1971 although the steam locomotive production in Czechoslovakia had already ended by 1958. In 1971 a period of engine traction started and gradually all steam locos were replaced by more than 60 diesel locos. Currently, the mill operates 20 engine locomotives of 741.7 range and 2 locomotives of 704.7 range. These secure the service of hot metal and steel transfer between individual plants and final products dispatch.

"But 1971 was not the last year that steam locomotives were in use at the steelworks. They came back for a few months in the winter of 1978, but for a different purpose. After required adjustments they were used for the heating of sheds where the construction of large capacity coke batteries was taking place. In March 1979 the heating by two steam locomotives was ended," said Vlasta Sázelová who is in charge of railway transport at LIBERTY Ostrava.

The last locomotive, which has remained at the mill in memory of the steam traction on Nová huť railway siding, stands outside the transport plant headquarters near the Southern gate. Its story is interesting indeed. The locomotive No. 317 015 was manufactured by Škoda Plzeň in 1940 and it had been used at the mill until 1970 and consequently was supposed to be scrapped. But employees were against it and took care of the locomotive transfer to the site of its final resting place. The displayed locomotive had been absolutely complete and fully operational until 2017.

„In 2017 the mill accepted the request of the Silesian land railways which operate the narrow-gauge railway at the Osoblaha region and donated the necessary spare parts for the reconstruction of historical locomotives. Thus, our steam locomotive still lives in these repaired engines," added Sázelová.

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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.

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