

**PRESS RELEASE**

28 November 2022

## **LIBERTY Ostrava to provide 100 apprenticeships to young people from Ostrava's vocational schools**

**LIBERTY Ostrava will welcome approximately one hundred apprentices from vocational secondary schools in Ostrava to try out their future profession in a real environment this school year. The programme will help nurture the future generation of technicians and encourage young people into a career in the steel and engineering industries.**

The apprentice education support programme has been running at the Ostrava steelworks for more than fifty years. Its current form was created in 2012 and every year since then about one hundred apprentices have passed through the steelwork's operations. Skilled apprentices who complete an apprenticeship at the steelworks during their final third or fourth year generally receive a job offer from LIBERTY Ostrava.

*"This school year, apprentices from four vocational schools will complete their apprenticeship with us, namely those from Vitkovice Secondary Technical School, Secondary Technical and Transport School in Vitkovice, Secondary Electrical Engineering School in Ostrava, and newly also from the Secondary Technical School in Havířov. Led by our most experienced foremen they are taking their first practical steps at the steelworks as toolers, electricians including those specialized in low current and high current, machine mechanics, mechanics-electrotechnics, mechanics-setters, electrical mechanics and as well as railway workers,"* explained recruitment officer Věra Válková.

Under the guidance of experienced experts from LIBERTY Ostrava, the apprentices gain theoretical knowledge and practical skills needed for working in the steel and engineering industries. The aim of the programme is to help improve the quality of studies at vocational schools, to make the trade more appealing to the younger generations and to secure enough quality workforce that will help the steelworks with the planned GREENSTEEL transformation and becoming carbon neutral in the coming years.

Radim Obrusník, foreman of electrical maintenance at the medium section mill is one of the highly experienced mentors. He has been working with apprentices for seven years now. *"The pupils that came to do their apprenticeship with us in the past years were very skilled, some of them have stayed and are now workers at the maintenance plant. The apprentices who have been doing apprenticeship at our place in recent years though, have been affected by the distant learning throughout the covid period, and manual work is difficult for them. But I do hope that together we will now turn down this negative phenomenon,"* said Radim Obrusník.

Under the supervision of experienced patrons, the apprentices allocated to the maintenance of the medium section mill start from scratch, initially changing a light or socket before working up to, for example, changing an engine.

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**LIBERTY OSTRAVA a.s.**

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702 02

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The nineteen-year-old fitter Jan Marek joined the LIBERTY Ostrava's maintenance team at the medium section mill this summer after completing his studies. He had been doing his apprenticeship for two years in a row under the guidance of foreman Zdeňek Závodný, who highly regards his young colleague. *"We convinced Jan to join us because he is very skilful. Recently he has even extended his qualifications. Such goal-oriented graduates have been very rare recently,"* said the foreman.

Jan was replacing rolls in rolling boxes for two years while doing his apprenticeship. Though it was a hard work, Jan enjoyed it and appreciated the opportunity to earn some money while still at school. Later he came to the same workplace for a summer job between the second and the third year and was able to make more demanding repairs of stands at the rolling mill. He took to the work so when he received an offer of a well-paid job at the same workplace after graduating from school, he was happy to accept it. *"One never knows what skills will come handy. That's why I have also completed the crane operator course. Another profession will allow me to earn extra money, for example through overtimes,"* added Jan.

Note to editors:

<b>Barbora Černá Dvořáková</b> Head of communications LIBERTY Ostrava	+420 606 774 346	barbora.cerna- dvorakova@libertysteelgroup.com
<b>Paddy Toyne-Sewell</b> Head of Communications - Europe GFG Alliance	+44 (0) 7767 498 195	Patrick.toyne-sewell@gfgalliance.com

**LIBERTY Ostrava** is an integrated steel company with an annual production capacity of 3.6 million tons of steel, which is used mainly in the construction, engineering and petrochemical industries. It is a domestic leader in the production of road safety barriers and tubes. Besides the Czech market, it supplies its products to more than 40 countries around the world. Together with its subsidiaries, it has 6,000 employees. Thanks to above-standard greening, it manufactures its products with the least possible impact on the environment. The mill belongs to the LIBERTY Steel Group.

LIBERTY Steel Group plans to invest 8.6 billion of Czech Korunas in the LIBERTY Ostrava GREENSTEEL transformation programme over the course of the next eight years so that is carbon neutral by 2030. The key element of the CN30 programme will be the replacement of the steelwork's existing four tandem furnaces with two state-of-the-art hybrid electric arc furnaces and the building of a new power line. The new furnaces, for which the contracts were signed at the beginning of July, will be delivered by Danieli, a leading global manufacturer of plant and machinery. At the same signing ceremony, LIBERTY Ostrava signed a Declaration of Cooperation with ČEZ ESCO to identify and develop renewable energy and hydrogen technologies and announced the launch of the GFG Foundation in the Czech Republic.

In addition to the modernisation of the steel shop, the transformation will also include an extensive modernisation of the steel rolling mills, which will improve the quality of steel and expand the product portfolio with high added value products. The investment programme will also see the creation of a renewable power plants for electricity production as well as the development of the GREENSTEEL Academy, which aims to upskill the plant's current workforce and encourage new people into the industry.

**LIBERTY Steel Group** is part of the global GFG Alliance owned by Sanjeev Gupta and his family. The GFG Alliance has three independent industry brands: LIBERTY Steel Group, the ALVANCE Aluminum Group and SIMEC Energy Group which share the same values and strive for a long-term sustainable future for industry and society. GFG Alliance operates in 30 countries around the world, with a total of 35,000 employees and a turnover of over USD 20 billion.

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