

## Metinvest and Heart of Azovstal Continue to Support Mariupol's Defenders through Training and Employment

Metinvest Group, together with Rinat Akhmetov's Heart of Azovstal charitable project, will continue to support the defenders of Mariupol with training, employment and workplace adaptation. Yuriy Ryzhenkov, CEO of Metinvest, announced this at the "Heart of Azovstal 2025. A Shared Path" conference held on 18 February in Kyiv.



The conference marks the second anniversary of the project and its extension for another year. Over the two years of its operation, Heart of Azovstal, which is part of Rinat Akhmetov's Steel Front military initiative, has supported over 7,000 of Mariupol's defenders. In total, more than 22,000 forms of assistance have been provided, including physical and psychological rehabilitation, prosthetics, housing for defenders with first- and second-degree disabilities, support with education and employment, and more.

At the end of 2024, Rinat Akhmetov decided to extend the project for another year and allocated an additional UAH600 million for it. The total amount of aid over three years has risen to UAH1.6 billion.

Ryzhenkov said: "Metinvest, together with Heart of Azovstal, will continue to support defenders through education, employment and workplace adaptation. We welcome Mariupol's defenders at Metinvest Polytechnic and across our enterprises. We are ready to give everyone a chance to find their place in civilian life. Together, we are strong. Together, we are building a future where every defender receives decent support and opportunities."

During the "Conversation about the Future" panel discussion, Oleg Davydenko, the Director of the Corporate Communications Department at Metinvest Group, noted that the Group creates conditions for war veterans, including the defenders of Mariupol, for their integration into the teams of each enterprise, as well as into veterans' communities and public associations where they can receive support.

He added: "The Heart of Azovstal is an example of our engagement. This is cooperation with veterans' hubs in the cities where we operate, where we help create maximum opportunities for their self-realisation."

Davydenko stated that Metinvest offers veterans a stable salary of UAH25-30 thousand along with the opportunity to retrain and pursue higher education at Metinvest Polytechnic university, which translates into career growth and a significant increase in earnings.

The head of Metinvest's corporate communications noted that the Group aims to be the first choice for veterans.

He said: "We want hundreds of businesses to work alongside us, competing for the top spot. Then all businesses will be open to veterans. The second important aspect is advocating for veteran programmes and providing them with informational support, as veterans may not be aware of our activities."

Metinvest also offers the opportunity to obtain a higher education at Metinvest Polytechnic, a mining and metals university, through the “Heart of Azovstal. Future” programme, which helps defenders adapt to civilian life and choose a professional path. The university offers war veterans a simplified admission process — an online interview without taking exams. Veterans can also choose advanced training courses to expand their career opportunities and develop additional skills.

Currently, ten defenders of Mariupol are studying at Metinvest Polytechnic. Some 20 additional military personnel are taking English language courses to enhance their career prospects. The university offers 17 bachelor’s and 18 master’s programmes, as well as a postgraduate programme for those seeking to pursue research. The educational opportunities at Metinvest Polytechnic are designed to help veterans integrate into civilian life and build successful careers.

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