

Tetiana Petruk: "Metinvest Aims to Raise the Bar On Corporate Social Responsibility for Working with Veterans"

Metinvest Group's Chief Sustainability Officer talks about supporting mobilised employees, reintegrating veterans and developing talent.



In the article entitled

["Come back alive. How companies take care of veteran reintegration"](#)

, edition Dsnews.ua writes how the full-scale war has become the biggest challenge for Ukrainian business. Not only when it comes to profits and integrity of property, but also the protection of one of the main capitals - human capital. And of all employees, those who defended and are defending Ukraine from the enemy invasion require special attention.

The total number of Metinvest's employees mobilised since the onset of the war has reached more than 9,000 men and women, according to Tetiana Petruk. That's why the company is creating an ecosystem for integrating veterans into normal life and work. This mission is paramount to survival of the business. All business processes are being consistently adapted to accommodate the return of both former employees and veterans hired in the labour market.

Metinvest's strategy for working with veterans is based on the principles of responsibility, consistency and internal fairness. In particular, the company is committed to adopting a unified approach to incentive systems for all employees to unite rather than divide teams.

The main areas of work with veterans include rehabilitation and additional medical examination. The company will also train managers and teams to interact with veterans, and the latter will be able to undergo retaining and workplace adaptation programmes. In addition, it is planned to set up an association and a space for veterans.

The company understands that every Ukrainian company will face a staffing shortage because of the war. A comfortable working environment for veterans will become a competitive advantage after general demobilisation.

In an

[interview](#)

with Dsnews.ua, Tetiana Petruk, who represents one of Ukraine's largest employers, Metinvest Group, discusses work with veterans.

— **Some of Metinvest's companies are located in close proximity to the front line. How does the company ensure safety of employees on its sites? And what is it doing for employees mobilised into the Armed**

Forces of Ukraine?

— Our employees have helped the business to endure, and it is our duty to take care of them. Since the outbreak of the war, assistance to our employees and their families has been an important area of work for us. Taking care of our employees who keep production going remains our priority. Each company has bomb shelters stocked with water, food, hygiene products and medicines to house people for a long period of time.

For employees who cannot leave their workplace, special areas have been set up where they can safely wait out the air raids. In addition, such employees have been provided with and must wear military protective gear.

Another focus is on employees mobilised into the army. As of now, there are more than 8,000 of them, essentially translating to one in every six workers. The company ensures they are equipped with bulletproof vests, helmets and winter clothing kits. Upon request, employees also receive equipment that helps them save lives and defeat the enemy.

We pay for medical treatment of seriously wounded employees. We also help employees who lost limbs in the war with prosthetics. The joint programme of Metinvest and Protez Hub involves 50 people and their family members, 34 of whom have already received prostheses worth up to €30,000 and undergone rehabilitation.

— What psychological support programmes does the company have in place?

— We are developing both general and targeted psychological support programmes. All Metinvest employees and their family members have access to the Metinvest Together! service whose psychologists have provided nearly 4,100 counselling sessions.

The company have joined a separate programme for women and children called "Unbreakable Mum" by the Masha Foundation. Some 300 female employees, wives and children of employees with war traumas have undergone psychological rehabilitation.

The Strong Generation Camp programme also helps to sustain mental health of our employees' children. This summer, 400 children affected by the war participated in the programme.

— Veterans have started returning from the war. How do you work with them?

— Indeed, more than 10% of our employees mobilised since the beginning of the war have already been demobilised from the Ukrainian Armed Forces. This figure, unfortunately, includes those who died defending Ukraine. Almost 400 employees have already returned to work after demobilisation, and the number of our veterans is gradually increasing. And this is a big responsibility, so we set out to adapt and systematise business processes for the return of veterans.

We are creating an inclusive ecosystem for the integration of veterans into normal life and work. We are doing this not only because a staffing shortage could become a major constraint on the post-war economic recovery, but also because these employees are our DNA with proven experience, qualifications and skills, and we understand that unless our mobilised employees return to their workplaces, the Group companies will lose a lot. To further develop Metinvest's talent pool, we are already hiring veterans in the labour market. We clearly understand and recognise that while serving in the Armed Forces of Ukraine, our male and female defenders gain not only military experience but also develop such important business competencies as leadership, teamwork, result orientation, cohesion and mutual support. The competencies for which we competed in the labour market in times of peace were called the "war for talent". Today, most defenders returning from the front line have these skills and can use them in their daily work.

We care about the health and psycho-emotional state of veterans, provide additional medical examination and explore opportunities to implement our own rehabilitation programmes. We also focus on programmes to prepare managers and teams for the return of veterans. Together with our partner, Wellbeing, we have already conducted webinars, "War Heroes Return Home", for 23,000 employees and launched training for managers at all levels.

— How will Metinvest compensate for a staff shortage? Do you have your in-house retraining and employment programmes, especially for veterans and people with disabilities?

— Eastern Ukraine, where our businesses are concentrated, is very vulnerable in terms of the labour market. This region has a much greater staff shortage than other regions. That is why, of course, we provide employees, including veterans, with the opportunity to undergo retraining in the occupations sought after by the companies at the expense of the companies, including at our university, Metinvest Polytechnic. Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, 19,000 employees have been retrained under various programmes. Metinvest's businesses in Pokrovsk, Zaporizhzhia, Kryvyi Rih and Kamianske have employed about 8,200 people.

In addition, to attract people to our companies and encourage them to earn more by working towards our business goals, we are creating new incentive systems. In particular, since this summer, employees of production and repair

companies in Ukraine have been able to earn more thanks to a team bonus. We have introduced an additional bonus for them, the target amount of which is 25% of their salary per month, depending on the production performance of the entire company.

We are developing return, retention and adaptation programmes for veterans. A workplace mentoring programme will help veterans to gradually update their professional knowledge and skills. Furthermore, we believe that the creation of veteran communities will make a significant contribution to creating a comfortable working environment.

We also stay committed to a programme for managers and HR specialists to teach them how to communicate with employees during mobilisation and demobilisation. And top managers will gain insight into the world's best practices for working with veterans.

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