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Metinvest Supports Gender Equality and Professional Adaptation of Women During the War



At the eighth Ukrainian Women's Congress held in Kyiv on 5 November, Zoia Geyntse, a representative of Metinvest Group, spoke about the impact of the war on Metinvest's gender composition, equal opportunities for women and men, and willingness to take up male professions.

The Ukrainian Women's Congress is a national public platform that shapes the gender policy agenda for the Verkhovna Rada (Ukraine's house of parliament), the government, local communities, the private and public sectors, and the media community. Each year since 2017, the congress has brought together top state

officials, members of parliament, international and non-governmental organisations, local self-government, experts, media and all those involved with gender equality issues.

This year, the congress addressed new challenges for business and the state regarding gender roles and social expectations during the war. In particular, the discussion focused on the need to develop new policies to attract women to non-traditional professions and change corporate culture in business. Another topic was the demand for training, retraining and development of their own business.

In addition to the Metinvest speaker, the “Business vs State. Expectations vs Reality” discussion panel featured representatives of Kyivstar, MHP-Gromadi Charitable Foundation, DTEK, PrivatBank and Gunia Project.

Zoia Geyntse commented that the mining and metals industry has historically been dominated by men, as it involves physical labour and work in difficult or dangerous conditions. Around 30% of the Group’s employees are women. Since the start of the war in 2014, Metinvest’s gender composition has been impacted by mobilisation, with around 10,000 men mobilised to the armed forces of Ukraine, or nearly 17% of the workforce.

Following the government’s repeal of a law prohibiting women from going underground, the Group has established its first female team at its Pokrovsk mine. Zoia Geyntse noted: “Women are operating mine equipment and are very proud of what they are doing to support Ukraine’s economy.”

At Metinvest, women also hold positions as crane operators, electricians, electrical fitters and so on. Zoia Geyntse said: “The percentage of women working at Metinvest’s enterprises is constantly growing. This suggests that they are ready for new realities and willing to learn new professions.”

The Group offers a stable salary and retraining for all women interested in working at its enterprises. It takes from three to six months to one to three years to acquire a new qualification, making it impossible to fill Metinvest’s 4,000 vacancies solely with women.

Zoia Geyntse emphasised that gender equality within the Group is reinforced by its human resources policy. Promotions, hiring and salary are based solely on an individual's professional qualities and skills. Both women and men can join Metinvest's talent pool, undergo additional training and be promoted.

Zoia Geyntse said:

“For example, a woman who joined Zaporizhstal in a blue-collar position became a forewoman of the cold-rolling mill after a few years. She has been with the enterprise for 13 years, and while her husband is serving in Ukraine's armed forces, she is performing an equally important job.”

In addition, Zoia Geyntse noted that the proportion of women who have decided to study at Metinvest Polytechnic, Ukraine's first private mining and metallurgical university, is also increasing. She added: “Women are enrolling in Metinvest Polytechnic. Their share is already 20%. We hope that this will continue to grow from year to year.”

Zoia Geyntse believes that ensuring the right conditions for Ukrainian families to return from abroad is one of the challenges impacting the gender balance in industry and business in general. She said: “Families will return if they have a place to go back to. Unfortunately, the enemy is destroying schools, kindergartens and residential buildings. Metinvest has already developed standard steel construction projects that allow for infrastructure to be rebuilt quickly and in an environmentally friendly way.”

The Steel Dream concept for rebuilding the country envisages ready-made projects based on prefab solutions: prefabricated steel structural elements. The concept of renovated residential neighbourhoods has already been developed for Mariupol and Bakhmut. Negotiations and work to adapt building designs to local conditions are under way with several other communities affected. A woman developed and managed the concept.