

25 September

Rinat Akhmetov Foundation supports the Iron Warriors Petanque Arena for veterans in Kyiv



The [Rinat Akhmetov Foundation](#) is providing UAH 8.6 million for an inclusive sports project initiated by Vadym Svrydenko, a veteran of Russia's war against Ukraine and Commissioner of the President of Ukraine for the Rehabilitation of Combatants. The funding will create the Iron Warriors Petanque Arena at VDNH in Kyiv, a public space where veterans can train and compete. Mr Svrydenko's team has already

received a special vehicle to travel to training and competitions. The arena is due to open this year.

What is the Iron Warriors Petanque Arena?

The Iron Warriors Petanque Arena is a planned public, inclusive and accessible sports space for veterans at VDNH in Kyiv. Veterans will be able to train there regularly, meet and take part in competitions. The arena is designed to meet international standards, which in future will allow it to host international competitions. The design also takes into account the experience of the veterans who will train there.

Who is Vadym Svyrydenko?

Vadym Svyrydenko is the initiator of the project and Commissioner of the President of Ukraine for the Rehabilitation of Combatants. He joined the defence of Ukraine in 2014. After an extremely severe injury, he lost all four limbs and went through a long recovery. Sport became an important part of his return to an active life, and he later began to develop veterans' petanque and built a team around it.

On 23 September, Mr Svyrydenko and his team met at the site of the future arena. The veterans played petanque, the design of the arena was presented, and the team received its vehicle from the Rinat Akhmetov Foundation.

Why is petanque a good sport for veterans?

Petanque is open to people of different ages and fitness levels, including veterans recovering from injuries. The game combines tactics, accuracy and teamwork.

*"Our idea is to create a centre for the development of veterans' petanque based at this arena. It is an accessible sport that veterans with different injuries and physical abilities can join. We want the site to become an example of an inclusive sports space where veterans can train regularly, take part in competitions and develop this sport in Ukraine," said **Natalya***

Yemchenko, Chief Corporate Affairs Officer at SCM and Chair of the Supervisory Board of the Rinat Akhmetov Foundation.

*"For us, this arena will be a place where veterans can come together, talk, train and compete. Petanque helps to relieve psychological stress, focus on something other than injuries and feel the support of fellow soldiers," said **Mr Svrydenko**.*

Who is delivering the project?

The Rinat Akhmetov Foundation coordinates the project and the work with partners. Its role is to provide the resources needed to turn Mr Svrydenko's idea into a real opportunity for other veterans to do sport, recover from injuries and return to an active life. VDNH is a partner in the project and has provided the land for the arena.

When will the arena open?

The Iron Warriors Petanque Arena is due to open this year. It will extend the sports infrastructure of the Urban Park at VDNH and give veterans from different cities of Ukraine a permanent place to train.