

A roll of circulation  
commemorative coins

## **We Are Strong. We Are United. Donetsk Oblast**

Donetsk oblast is the eastern bastion of Ukraine, a land where boundless steppes meet majestic industrial horizons. Across its 26,500 square kilometers, a unique history has been preserved – a place where, under the steppe winds and among the black coal seams, a land with unyielding will and unbreakable strength of spirit was formed.

This land has always had the ability to impress. At its heart lie 93% of Ukraine's coal deposits – the “burning stones” first discovered by the Cossacks at the turn of the 17th century. This very discovery marked the beginning of Donetsk oblast's economic journey, when the British entrepreneur John Hughes founded Yuzivka (now the city of Donetsk) in the 19th century – a step that gave rise to major cities, factories, railways, metallurgical giants, and rapid urbanization. Coal fueled the further development of Donetsk oblast and has become an integral part of its cultural and industrial heritage, leaving its mark on the names of cities like Vuhledar and Shakhtarsk (names derived from the Ukrainian words for “coal” and “mine”), as well as on the famous football club “Shakhtar.” But Donetsk oblast is not just about industry. Beyond its factories, another world begins: steppes that dissolve into a mirage, and the largest artificial forest in Europe – the Velykoanadolskyi Forest – which convincingly proved that even within the harsh, arid steppe, living green oases can be created, where life sprouts in defiance of everything. The huge mining spoil tips (or slag heaps), which have become the region's distinctive mountains – embodying the strength and labor of its people and serving as a reminder of environmental challenges – will await this land's rebirth.

Did you know about the oldest stone forest in Eurasia – the Druzhkivka Stone Forest – or about the Soledar salt mines, an underground world with tunnels stretching over 300 km? There, within the natural microclimate carved out of the salt massif, true man-made wonders

appeared: a salt football field, a café, a church, a concert hall, salt sculptures, and even a sanatorium.

It was the Donbas that gave Ukraine Vasyl Stus, a figure whose life was a symbol of the struggle for freedom and human rights. And on these lands, Dziga Vertov filmed his innovative movies, which impressed Charlie Chaplin, while the poems of Mykhailo Petrenko and Volodymyr Sosiura have become an integral part of the nation's cultural heritage. It is also worth recalling that here, amid the industrial landscapes, the famous Chervona Ruta festival took place, and global excitement surged here during the UEFA Euro 2012.

But the spring of 2014 changed Donetsk oblast forever. Russian aggression destroyed cities, ruined infrastructure, and shattered millions of human lives. Cities that were once vibrant and full of life have been turned into silent ruins.

*Yet, it was precisely because of this eastern region that the world saw what Ukrainians are like when they defend their land. The heroic Cyborg soldiers held the defense of Donetsk Airport for 242 days – until the moment there was virtually nothing left to defend. Residents took to the streets with Ukrainian flags, fully aware that this could cost them their freedom or even their lives. Mariupol fought to its last breath, and Azovstal was a fortress for Ukrainian defenders, a symbol of resilience and courage.*

Donetsk oblast will surely return home – even stronger, and truly ours! We are strong, we are united, and this unity will overcome any challenge.

Glory to Ukraine! Glory to the Heroes!

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# WE ARE STRONG. WE ARE UNITED. DONETSK OBLAST

NATIONAL BANK OF UKRAINE



## Issue date

1 December 2025

## Metal

nickel-plated  
zinc-based alloy

## Diameter

23.5 mm

## Quality

uncirculated

## Edge

grooved

## Mintage

2,000,000

CIRCULATION COMMEMORATIVE COIN • 2025