

Nationalization Challenge Renewed in Court

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A Ukrainian court has renewed proceedings in a long-frozen trial in which two local businessmen are challenging the nationalization of a large steel mill which has since been sold to ArcelorMittal, court files show.

ArcelorMittal bought the Kryviy Rih steel mill for about \$4.8 billion at an open tender in 2005 after a newly elected government cancelled its sale to Ukrainian steel moguls Rinat Akhmetov and Viktor Pinchuk for \$800 million a year earlier.

The re-sale was one of the first major moves by the government of Yulia Tymoshenko who became prime minister after leading the 2004 Orange Revolution protests against then-president Leonid Kuchma and his would-be successor Viktor Yanukovich.

Akhmetov, Ukraine's wealthiest man and Yanukovich's key backer, and Pinchuk, also a billionaire and Kuchma's son-in-law, sued the government then but their lawsuit was

shelved in 2005.

Tymoshenko quickly fell out with her Orange ally Viktor Yushchenko, who became president in 2005. In the next election in 2010, she ran for the presidency herself but lost narrowly to Yanukovich.

Yanukovich's backers such as Akhmetov and Dmytro Firtash, another billionaire industrialist, have since successfully challenged government decisions made under Tymoshenko, winning compensation or having their revoked licenses renewed.

In the Kryviy Rih steel mill case, a joint venture set up by Akhmetov and Pinchuk's companies is suing the State Property Fund over its decision to cancel the plant's sale to them and wants it overturned.

The court renewed proceedings in the case on May 22 and was due to hold a hearing on June 4 but has not published any documents afterwards.

The State Property Fund had no immediate comment on the case.

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