

## **Press information**

### **The European household appliances industry: Restructuring processes, innovation strategies and industrial relations at European level – what role for European works councils?**

Arezzo, 27-29 June 2007

Trade union, enterprise and research institution representatives from old and new EU Member States will meet in Arezzo for the first time, from June 27<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> 2007, to discuss possible alternatives to restructuring and relocation strategies, which have so far been pursued by multinational manufacturers of electrical household appliances. The discussion will refer to a study carried out by the Italian research institute Fondazione Istituto per il Lavoro, which points out the disquieting dimension of relocation of manufacturing activities to low labour cost countries and of the job losses suffered in the old EU Member States.

The alternative approach adopted by the European Metalworkers' Federation (EMF) and by the affiliated metalworkers' unions is mainly focused on innovation processes to make jobs within the electrical household appliances manufacturing companies in the old EU member states safer. The policy paper that was adopted by the European metalworkers' unions identifies three main directions for an innovation strategy:

- 1.) Competitive advantages in the old EU member states in the R&D and training areas must be better capitalised on, also with a view to developing products that might better meet new demands resulting from the population ageing processes within western societies.
- 2.) In order to better meet environmental policy objectives, the electrical household appliances industry should commit itself to manufacturing low energy consumption household appliances. Statutory minimum standards should contribute to overcoming a kind of competition that is merely based on price reduction.
- 3.) European Commission funds should be exclusively allocated to long-term job creating companies that commit themselves to implementing sustainable development policies within regions.

“The European metalworkers' unions will firmly oppose mass dismissals and the closure of production sites. The metalworkers' unions demand a responsible policy of the employers in the European household appliances industry that guarantees the affected employees new employment prospects for the future”, said Peter Scherrer, EMF General Secretary, referring to the growing number of relocation processes in the household appliances industry.

For further information please visit the website: <http://www.fipl.it/progetti/prohai/index.html>