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Press Information ▪ Press Information

EMF Trade Union Coordination Group on VW confirms European solidarity and willingness to find European solutions

Today in Brussels the EMF held the first meeting of its Trade Union Coordination Group on VW with representatives from Belgium, German, Spain, Poland, Portugal, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and the United Kingdom. The participants were trade union officers, VW European Works Council (EWC) members and members of the German VW Supervisory Board.

The conclusions of the meeting presented at the press conference held after the meeting were as follows:

- All the unions under the EMF umbrella unanimously objected to the VW management announcement to drastically cut 4,000 jobs in VW Forest since if this were to occur they considered that Forest would no longer be viable in the long term. In general they reject any plant closures in Europe.
- The EMF calls on VW management to produce a clear industrial plan which will secure the production of alternative models at VW Forest to guarantee its future, including bridging measures until new models are introduced.
- The unions call for socially responsible measures on the part of VW management with regard to workers who will be affected by the restructuring plans.
- The EMF Trade Union Coordination Group will make an independent assessment of the situation of VW AG and its production plans and draw up an alternative industrial plan.
- There was confirmation from the EMF Trade Union Coordination Group of strong coordination and solidarity with the Belgian workers – not only those directly employed in VW Forest, but also in the supplier companies. They would demonstrate this solidarity by taking part in the national demonstration called by the Belgian trade union confederations on 2nd December 2006.
- The EMF Trade Union Coordination Group established a network to ensure the continuous exchange of information between the unions, the VW EWC and the EMF.
- If necessary, the EMF is prepared to organise Europe-wide action in solidarity with all the workers affected by the VW restructuring plan.

“There was no discordant voice among the trade unions present. They all rejected the procedure followed by VW management and the present plans. Furthermore, they declared their willingness to share the burden and fight for a viable long-term European solution,” declared the EMF General Secretary Peter Scherrer.

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The VW EWC Chairman, Bernd Osterloh called on VW management to produce "A medium-term industrial plan and develop a European concept which would promote VW cars in Europe and secure production sites." He confirmed that German workers had refused any increase of working time as a result of the production stoppage in Forest.

Directly after the meeting, Peter Scherrer had a meeting with Martin Schulz, the President of the Socialist Group in the European Parliament, and John Monks, the General Secretary of the ETUC, to discuss the VW case in relation to European politics, i.e. the need to secure a strong automotive industry in Europe, a pro-active European industrial policy, as well as the development of a European framework of negotiation in order to avoid workers from different sites being played off against each other.

The EMF is the representative body defending the interests of workers in the European metal industry. The EMF has a mandate for the external representation and coordination of the metalworkers' unions and a mandate to engage in bargaining at European level.

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