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European restructuring at Volkswagen

The leading German automobile producer Volkswagen is undergoing a European restructuring programme and has already announced job cuts in Germany. However, last Friday, after the meeting of the supervisory board, uncertainty arose as to the future of the "Forest" VW plant in Brussels. "It is unacceptable that the Volkswagen management is leaving the workers without clear and solid information about the future of the production at Forest" stated the General Secretary of the European Metalworkers' Federation (EMF) Peter Scherrer.

The strike of the Belgian VW workers is just a first reaction to the possible job losses. The EMF will respond to the situation by holding a meeting of trade union representatives from all European Volkswagen plants on 27th November in order to coordinate a joint trade union reaction to the measures taken by the management in connection with the restructuring programme. "The metalworkers' trade unions will neither accept any plant closures nor forced redundancies. European restructuring needs a European response which can only be European solidarity" pointed out Peter Scherrer.

As in other cases of restructuring, a European framework agreement is needed in order to avoid that one plant is played off against the other. Good and thorough information and consultation of the trade unions, and among the trade unions, is essential for a strategy which protects the workers' interests. "The EMF will provide the needed European platform for the co-ordination of the workers and trade unions affected by the plans of the VW management" confirmed Peter Scherrer.

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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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