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Press Information ▪ Press Information

European trade union opposition to the closure of the PSA plant at Ryton

On 27th April 2006 PSA employee representatives and trade unions with membership in PSA from the UK, France and Spain met in Brussels under the auspices of the European Metalworkers' Federation (EMF) and in the presence of a representative of the International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF).

They came out strongly against the closure of the UK Ryton plant. They want to talk to management about alternative industrial solutions for continuing PSA activities at Ryton. "The Ryton industrial site has its place in an automotive group which is financially profitable and whose production is expanding", stated Bart Samyn, the EMF General Secretary.

The European trade unions reject an industrial strategy which is chiefly motivated by repositioning towards low-cost countries and unconfirmed emerging markets. The decision to manufacture the 207 at TRNAVA (Slovakia) rather than at Ryton, the refusal of British State Aid and the lack of new projects were the advance signs of the fact that the closure of Ryton had been planned for some time.

This decision was taken without prior consultation of the British trade unions and the European Works Council (EWC). The European trade unions call on management to immediately convene an extraordinary EWC meeting to discuss the group's industrial concept for the future, the expert report on which management based its decision and industrial alternatives for Ryton.

The European trade unions unhappily note that at the very time when the PSA management was negotiating with them an international framework agreement pertaining to social responsibility – an agreement whose purpose was to set out the group's social commitment – this same management was actually busy with preparation of the announcement of the closure of Ryton, and doing so in complete disregard of the most elementary rules with regard to employee information and consultation.

The development of the group cannot be carried out to the detriment of its workforce. Nor can it lead to the playing off of one group of workers against the others.

The European unions recall that they are prepared to actively support the British workers and their families.

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Press Release

The defence of the interests of all the employees in the group hinges on the defence of the Ryton workforce!

The announcement of the Ryton closure, following on the heels of the recent closure of Rover, is another hard blow for the British car industry. It is high time for the British government as well as the European decision-makers to give proper consideration to the question of the future of the automotive industry in the UK and Europe.

Editor: Peter Scherrer, EMF General Secretary