



Europäischer Metallgewerkschaftsbund  
Fédération Européenne des Métallurgistes  
European Metalworker's Federation

15<sup>th</sup> July 2003

## PRESS RELEASE

### **A FUTURE FOR THE EUROPEAN SHIPBUILDING INDUSTRY: LeaderSHIP 2015 needs a commitment for immediate action**

The Report LeaderSHIP 2015, seen as an industrial policy framework to develop and to strengthen competitiveness as well as ensure a high level of employment of the European shipbuilding industry, was presented at a high-level advisory group meeting chaired by Commissioner Erkki Liikanen in Brussels on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2003.

“In the framework of the new industrial policy approach of the Commission, LeaderSHIP 2015 has shown the will and the ability of European industrial stakeholders to develop a pro-active industrial policy approach on a sectoral basis”, stated Reinhard Kuhlmann, General Secretary of the European Metalworkers Federation. LeaderSHIP 2015 was elaborated in less than half a year on the basis of an initiative of industry (CESA) and the trade unions (EMF). “With the expertise of industry, the EU Commission services and the EMF, a substantial contribution has been made to define the future of the European shipbuilding and ship repair industry. Competitiveness through excellence is the appropriate guideline”, the EMF declared. “But excellence does not mean products and technology alone; excellence means qualification and motivation of the workforce as well.”

- The EMF supports the commitment of the stakeholders to establish a level playing field in world shipbuilding.
- The EMF supports improving research development and innovation investment in the European shipbuilding industry as a joint responsibility of industry and governments, both on the national and the European level.
- The EMF supports all activities to develop advanced financing and guarantee schemes.
- The EMF is in favour of promoting safer and more environment friendly ships.

---

FEM 34/2003

And last but not least:

- the EMF strongly underlines the need for a European approach to naval shipbuilding restructuring
- and the EMF is in favour of maintaining and developing a skilled workforce as a precondition for reconstruction and competitiveness.

“From the point of view that all stakeholders have now taken the responsibility to create a sustainable structure for the industry, which in the long run can become a serious and successful player on the global market, this dossier must now be immediately implemented. The concrete commitment for implementation and follow-up, for monitoring and action is now necessary”, stated Reinhard Kuhlmann.

But there are still some open questions and dangerous developments:

- There is a danger of a series of bankruptcies and closures with mass redundancies already this year. We are on the verge of a deep crisis with massive plant closures and redundancies. LeaderSHIP 2015 gives no answer to these real problems and, as John Maynard Keynes said: in the long run we are already dead.
- The Korean danger, with its brutal approach of breaking competition rules, has not been solved and not even been reduced. LeaderSHIP 2015 does not provide any answer as to how to speed up reaction and deal with this challenge.
- A strategic approach to restructuring must develop alternatives for the workforce. There is no elaborated strategy of education and training including bridges to other forms of employment in sight. LeaderSHIP 2015 fails to give an answer to this problem.
- The R&D issue has to be developed further. From the EMF standpoint, support for prototypes is an urgent need and could result in immediate success.
- The structure of industry itself shows substantial deficits. Mainly the shareholders of private industry and governments, together with the trade unions, are in charge of promoting a competitive industrial structure, high quality and a “centres of excellence” network to regain competitiveness and employment at the European level.

“The most important asset, the real value of the European shipbuilding industry, is a qualified and trained workforce. Here lies the real future of the European shipbuilding industry!” the General Secretary of the EMF said.

---