

Opel/Vauxhall restructuring

Declaration of the European Metalworkers' Federation

Innovation, knowledge and quality, as well as growth and employment, should be the guidelines for the restructuring of Opel/Vauxhall in the face of the challenge of declining markets and decreased market shares for Opel Vauxhall all over Europe.

Plant closures and mass redundancies, together with violation of collective bargaining and bi-lateral agreements, do not contribute to regaining success, and cost-cutting at any price will damage Opel/Vauxhall's public image and destroy its innovative manufacturing and technological capacity.

The trade union leaders with members in Opel/Vauxhall reject any attempt by management to threaten the workers in different manufacturing plants and to play one off against the other. It is unacceptable for the Company to announce plant closures and mass redundancies without a satisfactory prior information, consultation and negotiation procedure. The decision to close the Antwerp plant shows that the Opel/Vauxhall management feels it can behave with total disregard for the letter and the spirit of the EWC Directive. It is an attack on the basic rules of the European social model.

Opel/Vauxhall has to come back to the basic rules of responsible cooperation in order to manage the restructuring process in a socially-responsible and economically successful manner.

There will be no successful restructuring and regaining of competitiveness without a responsible information, consultation and negotiation process. Our basic demands therefore are:

- The closure decision on Antwerp must be revoked and no forced redundancies are acceptable.
- A clear long-term industrial strategy for the Antwerp plant must be delivered by Opel/Vauxhall management.
- Full compliance with the agreed European SUV allocation must be guaranteed.
- Subject to the decision on Antwerp being revoked, any future negotiation on employee contributions towards cost saving must be conducted by the EMF and the EEF.
- Government aid and subsidies should not be used to finance closures and/or forced redundancies.
- Opel/Vauxhall management must ensure a fair European distribution of capacities, including engineering.

- National collective agreements in the individual countries must be respected and there must be a total exclusion of any kind of social and tax dumping.
- No new recruitment should take place whilst job losses are occurring in other plants.
- No increases in working time.

The EMF and its member organisations are committed to and prepared for all kinds of cross-border activities with a view to informing and consulting the workers about the ongoing restructuring process.

The Opel/Vauxhall case is a bad example of big multinational companies trying to play off workers and unions across borders. There is only one answer from the metalworkers' unions in a European view: **unity of the unions and the workers across borders to ensure no plant closures and no compulsory redundancies.**

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