

16 July 2021, Brussels

To:

Liam Butterworth

Chief Executive Officer GKN Automotive Ltd
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John Webb

Chief Human Resources Officer GKN Automotive Ltd
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Markus Bannert

President GKN Driveline
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Re: Intended closure of the GKN Driveline Firenze S.p.A. site in Campi Bisenzio, Italy

Dear Mr. Butterworth,
Dear Mr. Webb,
Dear Mr. Bannert,

On 12 July 2021, we have been informed of your decision to move production elsewhere and to dismiss all the workers employed in Campi Bisenzio, Florence, following a personal message sent to all employees concerned and an extraordinary online meeting of the European Works Council. We strongly oppose this decision, both **in method and in substance**.

It should also be pointed out that local authorities were equally shocked by this announcement and have already invited the GKN management and social partners for an urgent consultation.

First of all, regarding **the method**, we find it absolutely unacceptable that 422 individual workers were simply informed by mail of the decision to relocate their jobs to other factories in Europe, followed shortly after by the confirmation of their dismissal, also sent by mail. This shows a total lack of respect for people who have dedicated their professional lives to the company, it also completely ignores the role of the social partners in the case of collective redundancies.

Furthermore, a two hour online extraordinary meeting of the European Works Council (EWC) to simply inform worker representatives about a decision that has already been taken is in absolute contradiction to the general rights and duties of an EWC and, more in particular, to the terms and conditions as laid down in the GKN Automotive EWC Agreement that was concluded on 12 June 2019. Indeed, this Agreement guarantees meaningful consultation before decisions are reached, whereby the EWC should receive timely and detailed information and have a meaningful opportunity to influence the outcomes through an in-depth assessment and the expression of an opinion, possibly assisted by an expert. (*i.a. articles 1.4, 1.9, 7.2, 7.3, 11.1*)

We also have serious questions about **the substance** of this decision. Even taking into account the difficult situation in which the automotive industry finds itself today, the rushed closure of a production site and relocation of the activities seems ill-considered, ill-prepared and ill-advised. The decision to proceed with mass redundancies also takes no account whatsoever of existing support measures for the economy from the Italian government in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Most recently, on 29 June 2021, a common understanding was signed by the Italian social partners that provides for 13 more weeks of short time-work financed by the government to be activated before any dismissal is declared.

Based on the foregoing, we urge you to:

- suspend the decision to close the Campi Bisenzio site;
- withdraw the intention to dismiss all workers;
- engage in a proper dialogue with worker representatives and trade unions, both at national level in Italy and at European level with the EWC;
- enable the EWC to fully play its part, providing it with comprehensive information on the economic and strategic rationale, allowing for an in-depth assessment assisted by an expert and seriously taking into considering the opinion that will be expressed and all alternatives that may be presented.

On the trade union side, we are available to evaluate all options that see the production continuity of the site and the preservation of employment as a prerequisite. We are counting on you to be a socially responsible employer and to abide by your signature on the EWC Agreement. All workers deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. Social dialogue should always be at the centre of the anticipation and management of change.

Yours sincerely,

Luc Triangle
General Secretary
IndustriAll European Trade Union