

Germany: 36 metal companies create 'Opportunity Alliance'

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36 large companies employing more than 1.3 million people in Germany, have joined forces to address the burning challenges of digitalization, automation, decarbonization and demographic aging. At least 10 million workers are affected globally.

News trends have already begun to disrupt economies and societies. The workforce will have to acquire significantly higher qualifications by 2030, or even have to learn entirely new professions. Many are working in jobs that can easily be automated. Many companies are unprepared for these challenges whereas economists fear a harmful concurrence of skills shortages and unemployment which could lead to social inequalities. They propose radically overhauling the German system of continuing lifelong education that offers longer and more targeted modules than those currently operating.

Jörg Hoffmann, president of IG Metall, says there is a need to talk much more about training objectives and the creation of concrete qualification paths for workers to avoid unemployment.

The Opportunity Alliance proposes actions, such as:

- Setting up lifelong learning schemes
- Developing in-house qualifications for employees
- Considering issues of competitiveness along with those of social peace
- Deploying cooperation and alliance strategies in restructurings ahead

Several training programs are being offered as part of the Alliance framework. However, there is a risk that retraining will not be enough and that with the 'baby boomers' demographic approaching retirement and the question of controlled immigration will arise. One has also seen that only a small share of the 12 million workers took advantage of the training offered to them when they were on short-time work during the pandemic.

Edited by industriAll Europe