

New Energy for the Future

The French site Vénissieux will not be shut down – together with management, the local employee representatives and the Europa Committee have developed a sustainable concept for the future.

(js) EC|INFO Our colleagues in Vénissieux can relax. After months full of fear and insecurity, the plans to close the French Diesel site are no longer an issue.

The new plan is to place the production of photovoltaic modules at this site in order to save as many jobs as possible and to secure the future of the plant located in the greater area of Lyon.

An industrial concept outlining this plan is to be presented by the end of the 1st quarter of 2011 at the latest. The responsible business area, Solar Energy, will now conduct a detailed analysis concerning the type and scope of the planned replacement of production activities. At the site, the news was greeted by workers at a general employees' assembly with great relief.

When it became known early in 2010 that plans were being made to close the site, Bosch's works council (EC) came together for an extraordinary meeting to decisively reject any such plans. "A closure of the Vénissieux site is something which we cannot and will not accept", said EC Chairman Alfred Löckle.

At the time, the European employee representatives criticised that alternatives had not been taken into consideration seriously or only half-heartedly. Subsequently, with the support of G1, a joint committee of



Marc Soubitez and Alfred Löckle (right): "We cannot and will not accept the closure of Vénissieux"

employer and employee representatives was created in order to evaluate industrially viable alternatives. The decision which has now been made reflects the commitment with which this cooperation was conducted by all stakeholders.

The staff impressively demonstrated their commitment and conviction concerning the future viability of their plant last spring, when approximately a dozen employees representing the French site embarked on a 700 km bicycle tour to Bosch's headquarters on Schillerhöhe. ■

EC|INFO Editorial

Dear Colleagues!

(js) EC|INFO At the beginning of last year the European Committee was confronted with several challenges: Social plan negotiations in Cardiff and the announcement of the Vénissieux site closure



were certainly the most serious issues. In addition to this there were conflicts in Malaysia concerning the recognition of two trade unions at the Bosch sites there, the integration of colleagues from India into our global network as well as the extraordinary meetings concerning structural problems in individual business areas, which have almost become a routine part of our ordinary activities.

Today, looking back on this turbulent year, we can truly be proud of our successes. In Cardiff, the best social plan in British history was concluded and in Vénissieux our colleagues have a prospect for their future and the employees in Malaysia have a trade union.

We want to thank all colleagues in so many different countries for their strong support. Without your solidarity and support some of these victories would have remained unachievable.

Kind Regards,
the EC-GA Alfred, Jiri, Marc, Jacques,
Aline and Jörg!

Stages on the way towards victory



Centralisation of Indirect Procurement:

EC-GA: Agreement for I-Buy concluded

(js) At the last EC-GA meeting CP/EI informed us about the global centralisation of Indirect Procurement. The EC's executive committee managed to get a number of concessions concerning the implementation of the project for all EC-countries. This is an excerpt from the minutes of the meeting:

- „There are no plans to adjust personnel levels in order to achieve the project's targets. The procurement teams at PUI and MAE are to maintain their current staff levels.

nel transfers (on a voluntary basis) will become necessary in order to strengthen the cooperation in the Indirect Material Bundling Teams (IBT) (this will affect 25 out of 384 employees in Germany). Existing participatory rights of responsible works councils at any of the affected sites will be observed in every respect.

- Disciplinary responsibility will remain with the legal entity. Global target responsibility (including responsibilities for the budget and personnel capacities) will be transfer-

in order to achieve the bundling of demands. This may also result in a reappointment of duties. This means that someone currently working in procurement for indirect material and services from several material groups at one site will be focusing on indirect material and services procurement from one or maybe two material groups for several sites in his or her procurement region in the future.

The categorisation of job responsibilities and related remuneration will not be downgraded due to the reorganisation of responsibilities during the course of Project i-buy.

- Where necessary, the reappointment of duties will be supported by appropriate training measures, e.g. provided by the Supply Chain Academy. Affected employees and local employee representatives will be involved in a timely fashion. ■



Full speed ahead in the brakes business

(js) It is official now: Bosch is negotiating a strategic partnership in the foundation business with the Japanese brakes manufacturer Akebono. During another extraordinary EC meeting, CB's divisional management informed the European employee representatives about the current state of talks being conducted with Akebono. The two companies are currently examining the option of creating a joint venture in the foundation brakes business in order to strengthen their operations in Europe, China, India and Brazil. With respect to the foundation sites in Thailand, Japan and Australia a complete transfer of business activities to Akebono is currently being assessed. According to current considerations, the sites in Bari, Italy and Brits, South Africa are to remain with Bosch.

Whether these tentative plans reflect the actual industrial structure of the future is subject to ongoing negotiations and remains yet to be determined. ■

- Employees in Indirect Procurement may stay at their current sites in order to guarantee that they can maintain proximity to their internal customers and local procurement markets. In Germany, minor person-

nel transfers will be conducted in accordance with the Target Agreement Process.

- Buying and procurement roles will continue to exist. In spite of this, there will be an increase in procurement activities beyond site-level

Interview:

Recognition instead of rejection



On paper, Bosch employees in Malaysia are entitled to a trade union. In reality they had to fight for this right. EC Chairman Alfred Löckle and EC Secretary

Jörg Schäfer as well as the IMF jointly supported our colleagues on the ground.

EC|INFO: *Recently you visited Bosch company sites in Malaysia. What were the reasons for this?*

Alfred Löckle: The International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF) and representatives of Bosch's central legal department were also part of this effort. The reason was to locally resolve a conflict that had been ongoing for twelve months concerning the recognition of two trade unions at the Bosch plants there.

EC|INFO: *What was the problem?*

Löckle: The authorities had decided that the trade union is not competent, in spite of the fact that more than half of the employees at both plants are members of this trade union. Local management used the authorities' decision as an excuse behind which they hid.

EC|INFO: *Was your International Framework Agreement helpful in this case?*

Löckle: Without any restrictions, absolutely.

EC|INFO: *How were you able to help?*

Löckle: Our International Framework Agreement guarantees the right for all Bosch employees to join a trade union. Still we had to admit to ourselves that effective help is only possible if you are familiar with the traditions, the political circumstances and the culture of dealing with each other at the company level. We organised a "round table" meeting with all participants locally, something that had never been done this way before. Our mission was to find a legal way to achieve recognition of the trade unions without provoking their

rejection. In frank talks approaches and solutions were defined which will now be implemented.

EC|INFO: *What solution was this?*

Löckle: At one of the two plants a secret ballot was conducted and the majority of the employees cast their vote for the trade union. Official recognition by the authorities should be a mere formality now. The second case is a bit more complicated, but again, both sides are looking for a way to enable legally sound trade union representation quickly.

EC|INFO: *What will happen next?*

Löckle: The issue is not yet resolved, but things are heading in the right direction. We expect a positive outcome sometime in January. Till then we will keep a close eye on developments. ■

Flag

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Europa Committee expands network in India



(js) Bosch employees from seven sites in India as well as trade union representatives followed the IMF's (International Metalworkers' Federation) invitation and met with EC Chairman Alfred Löckle and EC Secretary Jörg Schäfer in Bangalore.

Over the course of two days the participants discussed future cooperation options and the current situation at their individual sites. For the EC, this meeting is yet another important milestone in the international mesh of Bosch employee representation.

Apart from sharing information regularly, there are firm plans to have our Indian colleagues attend the next Bosch World Meeting. ■