

Union: Opel Closure, Job Cuts A 'Declaration Of War'

BERLIN (AP) — Employee representatives at General Motors Co.'s Opel unit on Friday slammed the automaker's announcement it would cut 8,300 jobs and close its plant in Belgium as a "declaration of war" on European workers.

Armin Schild, head of the IG Metall union in Frankfurt and a member of Opel's board, criticized GM for lacking a clear and thoroughly financed restructuring concept, the DAPD news agency reported.

"Now, GM is apparently off on the next horror trip," Schild said.

He criticized GM for mismanaging the company for 15 years and called the planned closure of the site in Antwerp, Belgium, "a declaration of war against all European Opel employees."

Opel CEO Nick Reilly announced on Thursday that the company will cut 8,300 jobs across Europe, including 4,000 in Germany, and close the plant in Antwerp — casualties of the "tough reality" of a shrinking European auto market.

The head of the workers council at Opel's plant in the western German city of Bochum, Rainer Einkenkel, said he feared further plant closures and job cuts.

"The worst is not over," he told German broadcaster WDR.

Representatives from Opel's European work councils and unions are to meet on Tuesday in Antwerp, Einkenkel told DAPD.

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