

Fiat Confirms Investment In Flagship Turin Plant

Colleen Barry, AP Business Writer

MILAN (AP) — Italian carmaker Fiat, which controls Chrysler, will go ahead with investments in its flagship Mirafiori plant in Turin, where it will produce Maserati SUVs.

Fiat confirmed the decision Wednesday, after signing a contract with seven unions on flexible work rules. Just days earlier, the company had cast doubt on future investments because of a constitutional court ruling that essentially forced it to accept representatives of a maverick union that had refused to approve the contract's terms.

The contract with the unions extends to Mirafiori the same more flexible work rules applied to four other Fiat plants and which have been a condition for investments. Fiat CEO Sergio Marchionne said that the contract "has been a crucial tool for the revival of quality and production of the Fiat plant in Italy," according to a joint statement by the unions and Fiat.

FIOM, which is the metalworkers' arm of the CGIL union confederation, is the only union to have refused to adopt contracts with the more flexible work rules, and went to court to force Fiat to accept representatives of its unions. The signatory unions on Wednesday urged FIOM to accept the contract.

Maurizio Peverati, the regional leader of the UILM union, said the investment sum and plans will be discussed in coming days.

"Mirafiori, which was given up for dead, will restart," he said.

The plant's 5,400 workers have been mostly on layoff schemes for the last two years, and Fiat is seeking to extend the schemes pending the new investment.

The investment will convert the plant to build a Maserati SUV and another model to be announced, Peverati said. Production of the Maserati is to begin next year for release in 2015.

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