

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1037/09

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to the Commission

Subject: Lindsay site in Lincolnshire and Europe's responsibility for avoiding conflicts among workers

One of the ugliest episodes in the history of the trade union movement in this era of globalisation is being played out in Lincolnshire, with British workers being set against Italian workers.

The current economic crisis, caused by a form of capitalism geared to financial speculation, untrammelled by rules and focused on debt-fuelled wealth, is causing extremely serious social problems, setting the poor against the poor, worker against worker.

This comes at a time when unemployment is on the rise in Europe, spreading fear throughout our societies.

There has been a succession of court rulings opening the way to social dumping, and the European Court of Justice's recent *Viking Line* and *Laval* judgments on the primacy of company law over trade-union law, as established under national provisions and agreements, have given rise to justifiable concern among trade unionists, lawyers and workers.

Wage dumping is providing business with a means of cutting labour costs, resulting in unfair competition, and the protests in connection with events at the Lindsay refinery are taking on connotations that right-wing nationalists are turning against 'foreigners'.

The British workers are claiming that the work contracted out should be performed by local workers, who have been hard-hit by the crisis. If it is true that the contract rules out the use of local workers, it is discriminatory, and the company has enormous responsibility in such matters, particularly since it is non-unionised.

How does the Commission intend to ensure that due respect is shown both for every individual's right to work and for the rules against social and wage dumping and discrimination?

Would it not agree that the provisions of the Posting Directive (2008/104/EC) that, when misused for dumping purposes, can create conflicts among workers from different countries, should be amended?

Would it not agree that an extraordinary plan for employment should be introduced as a central part of European policies aimed at putting an end to the crisis?