

ORAL QUESTION WITH DEBATE O-0059/05

pursuant to Rule 108 of the Rules of Procedure

by Ilda Figueiredo, Francis Wurtz, Pedro Guerreiro, Miguel Portas, Gabriele Zimmer, Dimitrios Papadimoulis, Helmuth Markov and Roberto Musacchio, on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group, Fausto Correia, Francisco Assis, Elisa Ferreira and Ana Gomes
to the Council

Subject: Subsidies granted to the Yazaki Group

The multinational Yazaki Group, which has factories not only in Japan but scattered all over the world, including various EU Member States, produces electrical goods, and is specifically the world's largest manufacturer of wiring, electrical cables and electric connection systems for automobiles. It has owned the Yazaki Saltano factories in Vila Nova de Gaia and in Ovar in Portugal for over 20 years, and in 1996 employed over 7000 workers; in 1998 it started relocating production lines to Morocco, halving its Portuguese workforce. It is currently threatening some 800 workers in the two factories (500 in Ovar and 300 in Vila Nova de Gaia) with collective dismissal. Job reductions are achieved by applying psychological pressure, placing workers with occupational illnesses on a special production line created by the company, and changing working hours with consequent reduction in salaries.

The work rate imposed on the employees is contributing to an escalation of occupational illnesses (tendinitis and others) which create a serious social problem due to the incapacity they cause, but the company refuses to take any responsibility. Since the recent developments involving the election of workers to the European Works Council and of representatives to the Special Negotiating Body, the company has not requested any meetings with these workers' representatives. Meanwhile, it is keeping up pressure to rescind job contracts, has begun removing machinery from some of the production lines in the Vila Nova de Gaia factory, and is insisting on the sackings in Ovar. Since setting up in Portugal, Yazaki Saltano has received many millions of euros in Community funding, over and above Portuguese national subsidies.

1. Just how much money has been granted to Yazaki Saltano in Portugal as Community subsidy? Under what conditions were these subsidies granted?
2. What is the total amount of Community subsidy granted to the Yazaki Group in the various Member States and candidate countries?
3. What measures are going to be taken, in view of the seriousness of the current situation (punitive behaviour, sackings, occupational illness, failure to comply with the provisions of the directive on keeping workers informed and consulting both workers and the European Works Council), so as to protect the jobs and rights of these workers?

Tabled: 20.04.2005

Forwarded: 21.04.2005

Deadline for reply: 12.05.2005