

Siemens cuts another 2,700 jobs in the energy sector

Elisabeth Zimmermann
26 June 2019

Just a few weeks after the Siemens Supervisory Board unanimously decided to spin off the company's entire energy and power plant business and launch it on the stock market as an independent company at the beginning of May, management announced further attacks on jobs and working conditions in order to make the IPO more attractive.

On June 18, the Siemens board announced that its energy sector, now called Gas & Power (GP), would cut another 2,700 jobs worldwide, 1,400 in Germany. This should save an additional €500 million.

The job cuts are focussed on the project business and energy transfer division, where high-voltage networks and transformers are manufactured. A cuts programme that will claim 6,000 jobs is already running in the power plant construction division.

Lisa Davis, board member for GP, justified the recent cuts on the grounds that they would "create more growth opportunities" that will "increase competitiveness in the energy market" and "better secure our business." In future, large-scale projects should pay more attention to the yields to be achieved and orders rejected if they are too low, she said

Those affected by the measures already announced are mainly in GP in Erlangen (600 jobs), and almost 500 jobs in the Schaltwerk Berlin, as well as locations in Nuremberg and Dresden. The impact on jobs in the supply industry in the affected regions is also significant.

The 2,700 new job cuts come in addition to the 10,400 announced in connection with the Siemens reorganisation in early May. This involves 4,900 people worldwide at Digital Industries, 3,000 at Smart Infrastructures and another 2,500 at Central Functions.

The Siemens group is gradually being transformed into a pure holding company by spinning off the

individual areas and listing them on the stock market. These areas then have to survive as independent companies in the market. Correspondingly, the pressure from shareholders to increase the rate of profit and to quickly spin off and close less-profitable parts being is stepped up. Other large corporations like ThyssenKrupp are experiencing similar developments.

In attacking workers' jobs and social rights, the Siemens management has the full support of the IG Metall trade union and its works council representatives. They work hand in hand with the management members on the Supervisory Board and in the Economic Committee on the plans for job cuts.

When they become known, as at GP, the well-paid union and works council officials sometimes feign indignation. For example, Birgit Steinborn, chair of the Siemens general works council, described the job losses as "unimaginative" and instead demanded a requalification scheme for the employees concerned.

The numerous previous cuts and downsizing programmes always ended with the board implementing its plans against the workforce with the active support of IG Metall and the works council. At the beginning of May, the latter had already unanimously supported the spin-off of the Siemens group energy and power plant division.

Birgit Steinborn, who according to *Spiegel Online* pocketed almost half a million euros in 2017 for her work on the supervisory board, justified this by stating that the spin-off gave employees in the energy sector a better future. In view of the announcement of another 2,700 redundancies, the workers affected will regard this as pure mockery.

Those who want to fight against corporate attacks must organise independently of the unions. This requires the establishment of independent action

committees, which will make contact with their fellow workers at other locations and countries and conduct a struggle to defend all jobs on the basis of an international socialist perspective.



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