

25,000 jobs at risk at Stellantis plants in Italy

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Planned job cuts at Stellantis in Italy next year will lead to the destruction of up to 25,000 jobs in car production. This was announced on August 8. Ferdinando Uliano, chairman of the Christian Metalworkers' Union FIM/CISL, said that Stellantis wants to eliminate at least 12,000 jobs in its Italian plants, and this will also mean the loss of an additional 12,000 to 13,000 jobs at parts suppliers.

The announcement was preceded by a round table (*tavolo automobilistico*) in Rome led by the Minister of Enterprise and Made in Italy (Mimit) Adolfo Urso, who belongs to Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's fascist ruling party Fratelli d'Italia (Brothers of Italy). In addition to Stellantis representatives, all three major metal unions—Fiom/Cgil, Fim/Cisl and Uilm—participated. Speaking to Italian TV station La7, Stellantis HR chief Giuseppe Manca said: "Stellantis has communicated to the unions the Group's plan for Italy, which assigns a mission to each plant by the end of the decade."

Stellantis Italy was created in spring 2021 through the merger of Fiat-Chrysler (FCA) with the French PSA group (Peugeot, Citroën). Since then, jobs at Fiat have been systematically reduced. Shortly before the merger, Fiat had about 55,000 employees; today there are only about 43,000, of which about 15,000 are in the Turin region.

Stellantis's plans in Italy are part of a global jobs massacre affecting plants across Europe and the US. "If the brands don't bring in money, we will shut them down," Stellantis CEO Carlos Tavares threatened a few weeks ago. For example, another 1,000 jobs at Opel in Germany are in acute danger. Again and again, production is interrupted by phases of short-time work. In Austria, the Opel plant in Aspern was closed last month, affecting 220 employees. In France, Stellantis has cut 600 jobs at its Mulhouse plant.

In the US, 2,450 workers are to be laid off at the beginning of October at the truck assembly plant in Warren, Michigan. Previously, 2,000 temporary workers and hundreds of employees were laid off from other

American plants.

The Autoworkers Rank-and-File Committee Network, which is affiliated with the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC), has called for a counter-offensive by rank-and-file workers in the US. Its statement reads:

A line in the sand must be drawn! Warren Truck is now a critical battleground in the global war on jobs. Autoworkers must make this the start of a broad counteroffensive, counterposing workers' rights to employment and a decent standard of living against management's so-called "right" to profit.

Will Lehman, an autoworker and socialist, appealed to workers at Stellantis sites around the world and urged them to take up the fight for jobs together. Will said, "We appeal to our coworkers across the world to join us in a counteroffensive to defend jobs."

In Italy, the job massacre by Stellantis is aimed at the heart of the Fiat Group, which also includes Alfa Romeo, Lancia and Maserati. Fiat (short for Fabbrica Italiana Automobili Torino), was synonymous with Italian car production 50 years ago, with over 2 million vehicles rolling off the assembly line annually in Turin alone. Today, Fiat has been systematically dismantled by Stellantis, and new models such as the E-Fiat 600 are being built in Poland and elsewhere.

This relocation of Fiat models to Eastern Europe sparked a heated argument earlier this year between Meloni and Stellantis, or the Agnelli family, the former owner of Fiat. Meloni explained, "If you want to sell a car advertised as an Italian jewel, this car has to be made in Italy." She demanded to increase domestic car production to 1 million vehicles per year.

Stellantis boss Tavares, on the other hand, demanded better conditions from the Italian state in the form of

incentives for the purchase of electric cars and the subsidising of its energy costs. This will enable him to increase his annual production from about 750,000 vehicles (2023) to 1 million.

Relations between the Meloni government and the Agnelli family have been strained for some time. The daily *La Repubblica*, which is controlled by the Agnelli family, is more politically supportive of the former ruling Democratic Party (PD). The newspaper has long accused Meloni of privatizing important state-owned companies, such as the energy company Eni, although the former PD heads of government also privatized state-owned companies.

Meloni has countered with the accusation that the Agnelli family, or its holding company Exor, “sold Fiat to the French.” Exor is Stellantis’s largest single shareholder at 15 percent, and Agnelli’s grandson John Elkann holds the position of co-chairman alongside Tavares at Stellantis.

The conflicts mainly revolve around how the Italian ruling class can safeguard its profit interests in a world market that is increasingly in crisis. While Tavares and Elkann are shifting production to countries with low wages and costs, Meloni is fomenting nationalism to divide the working class. However, the jobs can only be defended if the workers unite internationally and fight together.

This is what the trade unions, which are themselves nationalist and deeply integrated into Italy’s capitalist economy, are trying to prevent. They are part of the conspiracy against the workers. Their entirely toothless protests against the job cuts at Stellantis cannot hide this fact. Their main objective is to prevent a working class uprising.

Rocco Palombella, chairman of the metal union Uilm, described the clear-cut plans as “hypothetical” and addressed Stellantis with a warning: “Factories also have a social role to play in the country.”

Fim General Secretary Uliano also only publicly warned of the massacre of 25,000 jobs next year in order to appeal to the government. He said: “In 2025, both the related industries and Stellantis will exhaust the social safety nets. If action is not taken in time, there will be mass redundancies.”

He called for the welfare benefit for short-time work, which the state grants to workers under the so-called “Cassa Integrazione,” to be extended. Currently, payments from the Cassa Integrazione are limited to three years.

Michele De Palma (Fiom/Cgil) argued that the government and Stellantis should jointly draw up a “strategic and extraordinary plan for the Italian automotive industry” and lamely demanded that the transition to electric vehicles must also be just for workers.

All three unions already signed an agreement with Stellantis on March 27, 2024 to cut around 5,000 jobs. It is supposed to run through “voluntary redundancies,” which merely means that workers give up their jobs under pressure and for a meager severance pay.

In Turin, 1,500 employees are to go “voluntarily,” and both assembly line workers, technicians and white collar workers are affected. For months, over 2,000 workers involved in the production of the E-Fiat 500 and the Maserati in Mirafiori have been repeatedly affected by short-time work. In order to avert an imminent closure, the workers occupied the traditional Mirafiori plant in Turin for three days in February.

The Pomigliano d’Arco plant near Naples, the former Alfasud production site, is also threatened with closure. In July, a strike for several hours took place against the unbearable heat in the workplace. In Pratola Serra, Fiat workers went on strike for a day in February after a 52-year-old colleague was crushed and killed by a machine.

Hundreds of jobs are currently being cut in Pomigliano, Melfi (Basilicata), Termoli (Molise), Cassino (Lazio) and Pratola Serra (Campania). Again and again, workers are temporarily—sometimes for months—released from work and put on short-time work benefits.

The *World Socialist Web Site* calls on workers in Italy and across Europe to join in building an independent rank-and-file committee to lead a common struggle against the planned mass layoffs. Sign up and fill out the form below to get in touch!



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