

Bosch to destroy 22,000 jobs in Germany

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28 September 2025

After announcing the elimination of 9,000 jobs last year, Bosch has now increased this figure by a further 13,000. It is the largest round of cuts in the company's history. The works council and IG Metall union are not even dreaming of preventing this jobs massacre. The creation of independent rank-and-file action committees that declare war on the union apparatus and its workplace bureaucrats is now more urgent than ever.

By the end of 2024, Robert Bosch GmbH employed almost 418,000 people worldwide—around 11,600 fewer than a year earlier. In Germany, the group's headcount fell by just over 4,500 to around 129,600 (down 3.4 percent). The Automotive, or Mobility, division is Bosch's largest area, and is the world's largest supplier to the automotive industry, employing 230,000, with more than 70,000 in Germany. With the newly announced increase in job cuts, 22,000 posts will disappear at Bosch in Germany, most of them in the automotive division, which accounts for more than 60 percent of total revenue of just over €90 billion. Last year, the supplier division's revenue fell by 0.7 percent to €55.8 billion. For the current financial year, Bosch most recently expected slight growth.

Nevertheless, costs are to be further reduced to safeguard and increase profits. In 2024 the group achieved a margin of 3.5 percent, compared with 5 percent the year before. At the start of the year, Bosch chief executive Stefan Hartung announced "painful decisions" for the workforce in order to double last year's €3.5 billion profit for the company's owners to at least €7 billion within two years.

Now Mobility chief Markus Heyn and labour director Grosch have put numbers on the "painful cuts" in an interview with the *Stuttgarter Zeitung* and *Stuttgarter Nachrichten*. They want to reduce the annual costs of the Mobility business unit by €2.5 billion.

To that end, the livelihood of around 20,000 families is to be destroyed. Particularly affected are the Power Solutions and Electrified Motion divisions with their sites in Baden-Württemberg, in Feuerbach (3,500),

Schwieberdingen (1,750) and Waiblingen (560) in the Stuttgart area, as well as Bühl (1,550) and Homburg (1,250).

The company stated that all this is to be completed by the end of 2030. "We urgently need to work on competitiveness in the Mobility area and reduce our costs further on a permanent basis. We are pulling many levers to achieve this," said Grosch. The further job cuts, "beyond the level already communicated," pained him greatly, "but unfortunately there is no way around it."

The IG Metall (IGM) and works council view the situation from the same standpoint as the top managers with whom they sit on the supervisory board, and their reaction is one of "understanding". There was "no question that the situation in the German and European automotive and supplier industry is very tense," said Frank Sell, chair of the group works council for the Mobility business sector. In the same breath, he hinted at how IGM and the works council intend to push through the jobs massacre. A "reduction in headcount of this historic magnitude—without simultaneous assurances to safeguard our sites in Germany—we reject categorically!"

In other words: the job cuts have Sell's and the works council's support if promises to "safeguard" sites are made. Not once in past decades has such an agreement prevented a site closure. Promises of safeguarding sites are always valid only for as long as they are not needed—so long as business is booming. But as soon as the order situation and thus production weakens, then a "review clause" takes effect that then allows the closure of plants and sites after all. As now planned at Bosch, the supposed site-safeguarding agreements are merely the means and the pretext with which IG Metall and its works council reps give their blessing to the demanded cuts and enforce them against the workforce.

The main concern of the IG Metall and works council at Bosch is that this time, they may no longer be able to keep the workforce—who in the past have proved through strikes and protests that they want to fight for their jobs—under control. More so if they are no longer allowed

to sell the job cuts as being organised in a “socially acceptable” manner.

For one thing, the current site-safeguarding arrangement expires at the end of 2027. And second, given the scale of the jobs massacre, Sell issued a warning: “We don’t have nearly enough retirees for the cuts to be achieved through demographics.” Twenty-two thousand jobs cannot be eliminated with the old mechanisms of early retirement or voluntary severance packages.

IGM officials and Bosch works council reps have taken on the task of implementing the attacks demanded by the company leadership—and the end of the line has by no means been reached. Their counterparts at VW have agreed mass redundancies, plant closures and wage cuts of up to twenty percent. At Ford in Cologne, they have once again enabled compulsory redundancies through a perfidious multi-stage blackmail mechanism. The IGM representatives will try to push through the savings packages at Bosch in much the same way.

The creation of a new organisational form for workers’ struggles, capable of breaking the bureaucratic control of the union apparatus and the works councils, is therefore urgently necessary. The Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party) proposes setting up rank-and-file action committees in every factory, at every administrative, research and development site, at all workplaces and also in the neighbourhoods where workers’ families live. These committees must become centres of resistance to the social devastation being organised by the government and corporations—not only at Bosch—that unite all sections of the working class.

Independent of all the establishment parties, the union bureaucrats and their apologists, the action committees are the instrument to unite workers and mobilise their immense industrial and economic power—at Bosch and across the entire automotive and supplier industry—worldwide.

Such a movement, led by workers who genuinely want to fight, requires a clear programme and a clear strategy. The central point of the programme must be that the interests of the workforce take precedence over the profit interests of company owners and shareholders. Not a single job must be sacrificed to pump further billions into the bank accounts of the super-rich.

The most important element of the strategy is internationalism. Workers must reject the unions’ reactionary, outdated and self-destructive nationalism.

Works council chair Sell and the IG Metall are calling for so-called “local content rules”. Car manufacturers

wishing to sell cars in Europe are supposedly to be forced to buy components that are produced under the conditions applicable in Europe. “For all industrial products marketed in Europe, there must be a mandatory share of European components,” writes IG Metall. “Anyone who sees Europe as a market should also be responsible for employment in Europe. For example: Chinese or US car manufacturers.”

This is the German-nationalist answer to the international trade and economic war. In view of the globalisation of production, which does not stop at the factory gates of individual companies either, it is first of all utopian and secondly reactionary. Bosch has 420,000 employees working worldwide at around 100 large production sites and around 70 development sites in almost every country on earth—including in China and the USA, where 53,000 people work for Bosch alone.

This policy of sealing off workers in one country from another divides workers in Germany from their colleagues in the USA, China and around the world. It is no better than the tariff policy of the USA under President Donald Trump. And there too it is the United Auto Workers union (UAW) that vehemently supports Trump’s tariffs.

Workers in Germany and Europe cannot wage an effective struggle if their actions are not coordinated with and united with the struggles of their colleagues around the world, above all those in the USA and China, who face the same attacks.

All those who want to fight for their livelihoods—for secure jobs, decent wages and a secure old age—must break free from the unions’ nationalist stranglehold. Get active, take part in building action committees, send us a WhatsApp message on +49 163 337 8340 and fill out the form below.



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