

# Defend the internal opposition at Bosch in Schwäbisch Gmünd against the IG Metall union bureaucracy! Build independent Action Committees!

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At the Bosch automotive supply plant in Schwäbisch Gmünd, the fight against the IG Metall (IGM) union bureaucracy must be consciously developed. After many workers opposed the IGM-led works council last year, the union and the works council under Claudio Bellomo are now taking massive action against the internal opposition, which has drawn up its own list for the works council elections on March 11.

Mustafa Simsek, himself a works council member, heads the “Free Metalworkers” (*Freie Metaller*) list comprising 89 candidates, which—unlike four other lists—is to be excluded from the works council election.

The election committee, handpicked by IG Metall and chaired by long-standing works council member Hakan Birlik, claims that the “Free Metalworkers” committed formal errors when submitting its slate which were supposedly not completely remedied even after subsequent correction.

It is completely unacceptable that IG Metall, of all organisations, should determine who may stand for election and who may not. It wants to silence everyone who does not prostitute themselves to the corporate leadership as it does. This must not be allowed.

We call on all workers at Bosch—and beyond—to vehemently oppose this attack. Defend the right of the “Free Metalworkers” list to participate in the works council election and thus the right of all employees to decide for themselves who should represent them on the works council!

This requires workers’ self-organisation against the IG Metall apparatus. They should register now using the form below to participate in the building of an

independent rank-and-file Action Committee at Bosch. Such an Action Committee must withdraw the mandate from the works council and its election committee. It must forbid them from speaking for the workforce or conducting elections in their name, which they manipulate and falsify in order to enforce their sole rule against the workforce.

At the same time, the Action Committee must begin to expand the fight against the IGM and for the defence of jobs. There is a large opposition in Schwäbisch Gmünd because it became clear last year how the IGM-dominated works council had conspired with management to destroy almost 2,000 of the approximately 3,450 jobs currently remaining.

In several agreements since 2017, IG Metall and the works council agreed to reduce the number of employees in Schwäbisch Gmünd to 2,850 posts by the end of 2026. In the coming three years, a further 1,300 jobs were then to be cut. In the meantime, the works council and IG Metall have signed off on the cutting of 1,150 jobs. Production in Plant II is being closed down, with the production of steering systems for trucks being relocated to Maklár, Hungary.

IG Metall had presented the cutting of 1,150 jobs as the “rescue” of 150 positions, because Bosch had wanted to destroy 1,300 jobs. Whoever has such “saviours” is doomed to death.

This spectacle is not limited to Schwäbisch Gmünd. The Bosch works council chairman at the Reutlingen plant, Thorsten Dietter, declared last week: “We negotiated hard over several months and were able to reduce the originally planned job cuts by 150 posts.”

This means instead of 1,100 jobs, “only” 950 of the almost 10,000 employees are being cut. In the Bosch division Cross-Domain Computing Solutions, instead of the originally announced 1,850 posts in Germany, “only” about 1,500 are to be eliminated. Similar results are to be expected in many plants if IG Metall is not halted.

As at Ford in Cologne, IG Metall at Bosch cannot justify the cuts by citing the “prevention of compulsory redundancies.” In an interview with the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* last month, Bosch General Works Council Chairman Frank Sell announced, “We are currently talking about a formulation that compulsory redundancies are not ruled out after 2027, but that both sides have no interest in this and that this only comes into question as an *ultima ratio* [last resort].”

IG Metall is organising the job cuts demanded by the corporate leadership in one plant after another. In total, at least 22,000 jobs are to be cut at the company, the largest reduction in the history of Bosch.

It is obvious that the defence of jobs makes a joint struggle of all employees of Robert Bosch GmbH necessary—and indeed not only of the almost 130,000 in Germany but of the company’s approximately 418,000 workers worldwide. IG Metall and its works council reps have no intention of defending any jobs but of enforcing their destruction. This is why they are consciously trying to play off employees against each other between individual plants and countries. This must be rejected unequivocally. Bosch workers around the globe, e.g., in Maklár, are the allies of those in Schwäbisch Gmünd, not their enemies.

In establishing an Action Committee Schwäbisch Gmünd, just like those in Reutlingen, Maklár and all other locations worldwide, two fundamental principles must therefore be discussed:

- The Action Committees must connect workforces across locations, companies, sectors and countries by joining the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC). The divisions sown by the unions must be overcome. An attack on one is an attack on all locations and their employees.

- The Action Committees must pursue a perspective that reaches beyond capitalism—that is, beyond the private ownership of the means of production and the nationally based system of competition, which the union apparatuses defend so vehemently. It is not

possible to defend jobs and wages, and at the same time accept the conditions imposed by the markets and international competitive pressures. Otherwise, one inevitably ends up with the policies of IG Metall and all the other unions. The decisive question is: Who determines matters of production—the shareholders or the workers who build everything?

The fight against IG Metall and its works council reps must therefore also not be left to the courts. Mustafa Simsek told the regional press: “We are having the disqualification checked by a lawyer and will initiate corresponding measures.” He could not and was not allowed to “comment on this in more detail at the present time,” he said.

As important as it is for workers to defend their rights in court against the attempt by IG Metall to suppress the internal opposition, the dispute must also be waged outside the courts.

The union will use all legal and prejudicial means to stop the opposition. It will drag out proceedings and find ever new legal pretexts to tie up resources—in terms of money, time and energy. With its billions in assets, funded entirely through membership fees, real estate and stock market deals, the bureaucracy can spin this out indefinitely.

Regardless of how a court decides, workers must now themselves become active. Contact us to initiate the next steps in the fight against the domination of the IG Metall bureaucracy. We assure you of absolute confidentiality. Fill out the form or send a message via WhatsApp to +491633378340.



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