

LC/AC/BD JUNE1

Brussels, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Mr. Nicolas Schmit  
Commissioner for Jobs & Social Rights  
European Commission

Sent by e-mail to: [CAB-SCHMIT-ARCHIVES@ec.europa.eu](mailto:CAB-SCHMIT-ARCHIVES@ec.europa.eu)

## **Announced closure of Nissan plants in Barcelona: trade union demands for swift EU action**

Dear Commissioner Schmit,

Following our meeting on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> June about Nissan's announcement to close three plants in the Barcelona area, we would like you to urgently consider the following demands for swift European Commission's actions.

### **Remind Nissan, and all multinational companies, about their legal obligations to inform and consult workers before any decision affecting them is made.**

As you rightly pointed out, in our meeting, these are fundamental EU rights, which Nissan has blatantly breached. Although Nissan's decision to close its Barcelona plants is apparently "*a result of an extensive study to mitigate excess production capacity and improve overall competitiveness*" (see [Nissan press release](#)), workers have had no opportunity to have a say in that process. Neither information nor consultation on the future of Nissan's plants took place prior to the decision being announced, be it at the local level in Barcelona, or with the European works council. EU law makes it clear that worker representatives must receive adequate information early enough in advance to undertake an in-depth assessment of any project of this nature, and engage into dialogue on alternatives with management. Beyond the joint letter we sent you together with the ETUC and European trade union federations (on May 20, see attached), we urge the European Commission to release at the earliest convenience a public communication about how existing EU legislation on employee involvement must apply, especially under the current circumstances and ahead of the expected wave of massive restructurings and insolvencies.

### **Set up a European Commission Task Force on Nissan to ensure all possible EU resources are pooled to support Barcelona's workers and industrial region.**


Building on our previous experiences, we ask you to set up a European Commission Task Force intended to assist the (local and national) Spanish authorities and trade unions in making use of all existing EU legal and financial instruments to avoid further deindustrialisation in the region and to support workers. Such a Task Force should coordinate EU initiatives by involving all relevant DGs that can provide assistance to those impacted by Nissan's decision. A number of examples, including

Caterpillar Gosselies, have shown the added value of this coordination to accelerate the adoption of measures to accompany impacted workers (“cellules de reconversions” in the case of Caterpillar Gosselies) as well as to roll out regional economic diversification strategies (the so-called “Catch Plan” for Caterpillar Gosselies was set up by local authorities to steer a reconversion strategy where EU-Funded projects are playing a crucial role). We also believe that the announced EU Recovery Strategy – and the related financial instruments - should be mobilised to that end. As you are aware, we are also in contact with Commissioner Breton, both on the specific case of Nissan and the broader challenges the automotive sector is facing (about which we issued a common statement together with Ceemet, ACEA, CLEPA, CECRA and ETRMA earlier this month. See attached). We appreciate that you will liaise with Commissioner Breton to best coordinate the European Commission’s possible actions on Nissan.

### **Review the impact the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement has on the automotive sector and workers in Europe**

We also urge the European Commission to use the relevant provisions of the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (mainly articles 16.3 and 22) in support of the Nissan workers but also to monitor the impact of this agreement on the sector in Europe. We believe that labour-related issues are crucial aspects of free trade agreements and that the EU has the duty to use all the means these agreements offer to force trading partners to respect workers’ rights. Together with our affiliated trade union organisations, industriAll Europe will continue to monitor the situation in Nissan and in the whole automotive sector. We suggest holding a stocktaking meeting with you on these issues in the coming weeks. In the meantime, we of course remain at your disposal should you need further information.

Yours sincerely,



Luc Triangle  
General Secretary

**Attachments:**

- Joint ETUC and European trade union federations' letter calling for swift action to enforce rights to worker involvement (20 May)
- Common IndustriAll Europe, Ceemet, ACEA, CLEPA, CECRA and ETRMA call for an ambitious recovery plan for the automotive sector (26 May)