



ewc report

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AXA refuse to go extra mile

Henri de Castries refused, at the Berlin European Works Council, to consider a request that Dutch employees be allowed to receive their 'AXA Miles' shares following Paris' decision to sell the Dutch arm of the company to SNS REEAL. The EWC had asked AXA to honour the gift of the shares to the Dutch staff, which they had already been told about, on the basis that the decision to sell AXA Netherlands was not one of the employees own making but the board in Paris.



Pic: AXA Utrecht – now out in the cold...

Further AXA's decision to sell off its insurance operations in the Netherlands to SNS REAAL for €1,750 million was also roundly condemned in Berlin. The sale, which includes the recently acquired Winterthur Netherlands, will result in around one-third of the thousand strong workforce losing their jobs.

The Dutch delegation asked Henri de Castries to reconsider the sale before it is completed in September saying they felt betrayed by AXA for selling them to a smaller Dutch company. Delegates from other small countries including Luxemburg and Portugal also expressed concern for their future as part of the AXA group given the decision by Paris to drop the Netherlands.

Henri de Castries responded by stating that the decision was not one entered into lightly and that it was the fault of the unprofitable Dutch insurance market that offered no capacity for AXA to reach its 2012 targets.

Italians strike over "arrogant" management...

Workers in AXA Italy have commenced a series of strikes and an overtime ban in response to what they claim as a failure of "arrogant" regional management to consult with Italian unions over changes in the Mediterranean region.

The Italian delegation complained vociferously to AXA Group management at the EWC about the fact that they had not been invited to a regional strategy meeting in Madrid. The Italians stated they would extend their industrial action if the constructive dialogue was not started.



Pic: Italian delegate Fortunato Ierardo.



Pic: UK delegate Annie Brownlee with Henri de Castries at the Berlin EWC in June.

Confusion over "Untouchables" ...

AXA management have given conflicting information over the issue of the employment of Dalits in AXA BS.

Group Chief Operating Officer Claude Brunte claimed AXA employed around 150 Dalits in Bangalore and Pune, almost 5% of the total workforce. However other sources state no Dalits are employed at all. Brunet did not

supply any information on the roles Dalits would undertake in ABS and the EWC has asked for more information and clarification of exactly why AXA has not signed *The Ambekhar Principles*, a set of employment guidelines for companies who operate in South East Asia.

The UK delegation was also very disappointed with responses by Henri de Castries and Claude Brunet on issues raised by British delegates such as Gender Imbalance in Management and Executive Grades and AXA's Carbon Footprint. When asked what had been done by AXA on these issues both men candidly responded "not enough" but failed to address the issues with affirmative action for the future.

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