

Europe Solidaire Sans Frontières > English > Europe, Great Britain > Social movements, labour (Europe) > Car Industry (Europe) > **Italian workers at GKN in Florence continue 3 year exemplary struggle**

ITALY

Italian workers at GKN in Florence continue 3 year exemplary struggle

Wednesday 24 January 2024, by [KELLAWAY Dave](#) (Date first published: 16 January 2024).

Despite getting their last pay packet in November 2022 and only receiving sporadic state benefits since then, there are over 200 workers at the [GKN factory](#) in Florence continuing the struggle to save and reconfigure their factory. There have been very few exemplary struggles like this in recent decades, and even fewer have been successful. Not only does their action challenge the rule of capital and the market over production, but it also raises the ecological question of what sort of products we need to produce.

Although the current Meloni government has made some demagogic statements about finding a solution, there is a direct political link between the current owner, Francesco Borgomeo, and the prime minister's office. Professor Gaetano Caputi is the head of Meloni's office but is tied up financially with one of the companies involved with the current owner.

The workers have reached out for international solidarity and to make contact with workers elsewhere carrying out similar struggles. They held an international meeting with them on 5 November 2023. Representatives came from the Spanish state, France, Greece, Argentina, and Chile, as well as cooperative organisations, ethical banks, and Fuorimercato (exchanges outside the capitalist market).

Progress is good on the one million euro cooperative share launch; 600.000 has been raised. You can directly send money to the Insorgiamo website, but the minimum unit is 500 euros. Individuals can group together to buy one unit or more.

The campaign to raise funds to facilitate a reopening of the factory through agreements with local and regional authorities is very important since it is clear that the current owner sees the opportunities for lucrative property developments on the site.

You can keep in touch with the GKN workers at www.insorgiamo.org, and also at <https://www.facebook.com/coordinamentogknfirenze>.

Latest Statement from the GKN workers (January 2024)

On 9 July 2021, Melrose Industries announced the closure of its GKN Driveline (formerly FIAT)

factory of car axles in Campi di Bisenzio, Florence, and the layoff of its workers (more than 400). In many such cases, the workers and unions settled for negotiating enhanced redundancy benefits, but the GKN Factory Collective took over the plants and kick-started a long struggle against decommissioning. However, what makes the ex-GKN Florence dispute really unique is the strategy adopted by the workers. They sealed an alliance with the climate justice movement by drafting a conversion plan for sustainable public transport.

Such a strategy led to a cycle of broad mobilisations, repeatedly bringing tens of thousands to the streets, so that the dispute is still open. The permanent sit-in at the factory remains active. The workers were meant to be finally dismissed on 1 January 2024. The GKN Factory Collective had thus turned New Year's Eve into a final call to action to defend their conversion plan. Such pressure from below probably played a role in the labour court's decision, announced on 27 December 2023, to overturn the layoffs for the second time.

The 31 December 2023, concert in the factory and the subsequent nocturnal march across Campi Bisenzio's industrial area became a mass mobilisation to relaunch the workers' current plan to set up a cooperative for the production of cargo bikes and solar panels, as part of a broader vision for a worker-led ecological transition.

This project needs material solidarity now – over 600,000 euros have been collected by the popular shareholding campaign to launch the co-operative, moving closer and closer to the target of one million euros. All information on how to contribute, individually or as an organisation, can be found at the website www.insorgiamo.org.

DAVE KELLAWAY

*A much fuller dossier of articles can be found at **Anti*Capitalist Resistance**-
<https://anticapitalistresistance.org/italian-workers-at-gkn-in-florence-continue-3-year-exemplary-struggle/>.*

P.S.

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