



ITALY: FIOM sees Fiat representation chink of light

By Simon Warburton | 24 July 2013

Hardline Fiat union, FIOM, says the Constitutional Court of Italy's ruling appearing to overturn the requirement for a labour body to sign a collective labour deal in order to provide organised representation, could see it return to the shop floor.

FIOM was not signatory to a flexibility productivity deal agreed with its other unions in exchange for a pay rise and bonus and was not able to represent its members in the usual way as a result.

Fiat CEO, Sergio Marchionne, told *just-auto* last year following FIOM's rejection: "We have no reason to sit down with FIOM - there is nothing to discuss."

But FIOM now sees a chink of light following the Constitutional Court's ruling and believes it may find a way back into traditional union activities.

"Our next goal is to be represented within these representative bodies in Fiat plants," a FIOM spokesman told *just-auto* from Rome. "The law says we can have shop stewards maybe, have a room to receive emails from the union, where they may have a conversation with other workers."

"They [perhaps] may ask for meetings in work time - one hour for [a] union meeting."

Fiat said the Court ruled unions are entitled to representation when they have actively participated in negotiations for a collective labour agreement, even if they are not signatory to such agreement.

However, Fiat is dangling the possibility it may review its future strategy for Italy following the Constitutional Court judgement.

"Fiat has yet to evaluate if and to what extent the new criteria for representation, as interpreted by the courts, may alter its existing industrial relations framework and the potential consequences for its future industrial strategy in Italy," said a statement from the Italian automaker.

"As the Court suggests, Italian lawmakers need to act urgently on the issue of union representation in order to provide certainty regarding the law and uniformity of interpretation."

"Fiat notes, however, the interpretation it has applied up to this point has been recognised not only as correct, but as the only interpretation possible."

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