

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release – 30 January, 2002

DUNDEE SHOP STEWARDS IN BRUSSELS TALKS

A deputation of shop stewards from Levi's in Dundee today met Scottish National Party MEP Ian Hudghton, as part of their campaign to keep the Dundee plant open. The deputation met the MEP during cross party talks, in the European Parliament in Brussels today, during which Mr Hudghton pledged his support to the worker's bid to keep their jobs.

Speaking after the meeting, Mr Hudghton said:

"We had a very productive meeting during which Union officials from the GMB and shop stewards put their case for Levi's to immediately withdraw the redundancy notices they have issued to workers at their Dundee and Bellshill factories. I support this call wholeheartedly in that it will allow time for workers to be properly consulted on possible alternatives to the company's plans.

Levi's has already closed factories in Belgium and France, but when they did so, the employees were kept fully consulted. Moreover, the company paid for expert advice to be brought in to enable workers to assess all possible alternative uses for the factories. We are writing to the European Managing Director of Levi's asking why these procedures are not being followed in Scotland, and demanding that they withdraw the redundancy notices forthwith. They must, get round the table with workers' representatives in Dundee and Bellshill and to set a full consultation programme in motion.

But the problem doesn't just lie with Levi's. Part of the underlying problem is that the UK is seen as a soft touch by companies who want to up sticks and leave. Scotland has had more than its fair share over the last year or two with companies like Motorola being able to shut up shop with apparently increasing ease. The UK Government and Scottish Executive have a lot of catching up to do with our European colleagues as regards protecting workers' rights. If they don't make that a priority, then Scotland has the dire prospect of becoming a "here today, gone tomorrow" haven for companies.

ENDS-