

## Report on the Innoflex Car Network Meeting at Seat Plant and nearby Supply Facilities

Organised by INSHT – Instituto Nacional de Seguridad e Higiene en el Trabajo with the co-operation of IpL – Institute for Labour (Bologna)

Visit to Seat Martorell (Barcelona) plant  
By Campbell Ford

This visit was arranged as part of the objectives of the Innoflex\* project to examine innovative and flexible forms of work organisation and producer strategies: particularly the role of workplace partnership and co-operation, including teamworking and supply chain issues.

The visit continued the discussion theme, carried forward from earlier visits to Audi and Lamborghini, of the analysis of the role and impact of teamwork organisation and supply chain management practices on working conditions and employee development and on the overall improvement in competitiveness.

Specific topics included:

### a) Teamworking

The meaning of functional and inter-functional co-operation

Form and role of teamworking in the car sector

Rules for an effective teamwork organisation

Impact of teamworking for personnel valorisation and competitiveness

Techniques, methodologies and ICT tools to support functional and inter-functional collaboration

### b) Supply chain

Trends and future of outsourcing strategy for production and product development

The meaning of inter-firm co-operation

Form and role of inter-firm co-operation through supply chain

Impact of supplier network for personnel valorisation and competitiveness

Working conditions along the supply chain

Multi-tier supplier network and modular organisation for supplier development

The role of mega supplier in the car industry

Techniques, methodologies and ICT tools to support inter-firm collaboration

### General Information

The plant was set up at the beginning of 1993 - originally designed to produce 1500 vehicles per day but now manufacturing 2200. In its first year only two models were made; the SEAT Ibiza and the Cordoba. Today a total of seven models are produced in the Martorell factory which comprises 3 million square metres and currently produces all of the SEAT brand

one Volkswagen model are built on three production lines.

The Martorell plant employs some 9000 employees - 87% are male and 13% are female. Of these 82% (7457) are direct workers; of whom some 90% are permanent contract employees. External or agency employees are to be found mainly in Logistics and Maintenance.

SEAT's emphasis on the importance of recruiting, training and the development of skilled staff is dramatically underlined by their policy of pre-recruitment training. A recruiting policy envisages a preliminary one-week course devoted to train the participants in relation to:

- company rules
- labour contract
- collective agreement
- production process
- company safety and healthcare
- work risks
- quality control
- trade union activity

All applicants have to undergo psychological testing, a skill test and a medical test and one in four are then selected to take part in a week-long training course to establish their credentials for employment. At the end of the course a second evaluation takes place and decisions are taken as to who should go on the waiting list for future employment. There is inevitably some degree of wastage but, unlike Italy, there seems to be little problem recruiting car production workers in this part of Spain.

### \* Innovative performances and internal/external workforce flexibility and personal/social consequences (INNOFLEX)

#### Objectives

The overarching objective of the project is to identify the conditions under which convergence can be achieved between quality of life and business competitiveness through the design and implementation of new forms of work organisation, and to identify means of reproducing these conditions through the actions of public policy makers, social partners and research-based institutions. Specific objectives include:

- Identifying emerging trends in work organisation and their impact on quality of life and competitiveness.
- A thorough review of academic literature in the field throughout Europe.
- Determining roles and conditions for performance measurement in production, including the social dimension.
- Identifying strategic choices in relation to new forms of work organisation, and their implications for social partners and public policy makers.
- Identifying the role of trade unions and other forms of workplace dialogue in supporting 'high road' companies.
- Setting up and evaluating 'learning networks' between large companies, SMEs, intermediate organisations, social partners, employees, etc.
- Identifying approaches to social dialogue and participation in the design and implementation of change projects.
- Developing guidelines for researchers, social partners and policy makers based on cross-national comparison and case-study results.

See also [www.innoflex.org.uk](http://www.innoflex.org.uk)