

VareseNews

“I’m proud to work at Whirlpool”

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There are many foreigners who work at Whirlpool in Cassinetta, but for some of them this reorganisation is nothing new. At the beginning of the 1990s, **Bauknecht**, the **historic Swiss brand**, was taken over by **Whirlpool**. After few years, the American multinational decided to close the plant in **Germany**. Once the possibility of being taken on by **Bosch** evaporated, **500 employees** were made an offer: to leave Germany, and move to Italy, to **Whirlpool, in Cassinetta**.

As the career prospects for the younger employees (mainly office staff and designers) were good, they accepted the challenge, and once they had reached the shores of Lake Varese, they married and settled down. “I was 29, and I left everything in Germany,” says one, who wishes to remain anonymous, “because I could see a future here. Now, I’m over 40, I have a son, and it’ll be difficult for me to move again, especially if they ask me to go to **Turkey** or **Poland**.”

Going back to **Germany** is not an option, also because, in the reorganisation plan announced by the American head office, the production of dishwashers in Neunkirchen will be transferred to **Poland** by next January. Today, it is the **social security conditions** that concern these employees. Although the Germans do not have as rigid a protection as Italians, in their country, they can count on a well structured **welfare system**. “We don’t have Article 18, which protects you always and anyhow, and there’s no dismissal without just cause. But our social security system provides good support, and, unlike in Italy, politics deals with these things.”

In Cassinetta, politicians never show their faces. “We saw them before the election,” said **Leonardo Lorusso of the trade union, UILM**. “But since the shock announcement of dismissals, there’s been no sign of either the Province or the Region. In Tuscany, they came to an agreement that involved the most important institutions and the university, to support the **Whirlpool production in Siena**, and the related business activities.”

The Whirlpool EMEA crisis is about the market, especially in **Europe**. Competing with the giants **Samsung and LG** has become increasingly difficult, because of the aggressive pricing policies applied by the two Korean manufacturers, despite there being all the skills to make good products, in Cassinetta. “I am proud to work at Whirlpool,” the German employee concludes, “because we make quality products here, and there are important professional skills which it would be a pity to lose. At this moment, we need more unity on the part of everyone, including the managers.”

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