
UK steelworkers union questions the future of the industry

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The Star reported that the head of steelworkers' union Community has questioned the future of the industry if the Conservatives win the next general election. Plants at Stocksbridge and Rotherham have suffered 1,500 job losses over the last year due to declining demand for steel caused by the recession.

Mr Michael Leahy general secretary of the Community has written a letter to Tory leader Mr David Cameron complaining at the party's opposition to specific help for the industry.

In his letter to Mr Cameron, Mr Leahy said that "Since January 2009, the steel Industry has been hit by this global recession in an unprecedented way, the workforce and management have worked together to keep costs low but despite help we have seen thousands of job losses."

He criticized the Tories for opposing Government moves resulting in more demand for steel, such as new buildings at schools and hospitals, and the car scrappage scheme.

Mr Leahy said that the union was also unhappy the Tories were planning to end the GBP 2 million Train to Gain program to help steel workers re skill, and abolish regional developments such as Yorkshire Forward, which have provided Corus with grants totaling GBP 3 million to help them through the recession. He added that "You affirm any form of government subsidy or protection for the industry is not the right answer. What do you believe is the right answer?"

Ms Angela Smith Hillsborough Labour MP, who is standing in the new Penistone and Stocksbridge seat at the election, said that "Comments made by William Hague have persuaded me the Tories haven't changed at all. His admission the steel industry won't get special treatment is seen by me as clear evidence South Yorkshire still has a lot to fear from the Tories."

(Sourced from www.thestar.co.uk)

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