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Future of Opel

EU competition policy also applies to the big member states

Flemish MEP **Frieda Brepoels** has called on the European Commission to act swiftly in order to help car manufacturer Opel, whose Antwerp plant is under threat.

The MEP was speaking in a debate at the European Parliament in Strasbourg on Monday evening about the sale of Opel to the Austrian-Canadian consortium Magna and the risk of job losses.

Brepoels also called on the Commission to look into the role of the German government and the state support given to Magna. Whilst EU Competition Commissioner Nelly Kroes assured MEPs that she would never allow taxpayer's money to be misused in order to serve national politics, Frieda Brepoels said further questions must be answered about the role of the German government. The Commissioner pledged to look into any possible breach of EU Competition rules in relation to the sale of Opel.

Frieda Brepoels commented: *"The European Commission must act swiftly. If they fail to do so, then a very unfortunate precedent will be set for all future cross-border restructuring where the smaller member states will be forced out of the market."*

Brepoels also questioned the credibility of any financial savings that were to be made, noting that the Antwerp operation is threatened with closure whilst the poorer performing German operation at Bochum is spared.

Brepoels added: *"Takeovers on such a scale must be resolved in such a way that the solidarity between workers in the different EU member states is protected based on economic merit rather than political motives."*

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