

Steel industry needs public inquiry, GMB congress hears



The UK steel industry needs a public inquiry to secure its future, GMB congress heard.

Delegates at the union's annual event – held in Blackpool this year – today [Monday] passed a motion calling for an investigation into how UK steel has ended up at crisis point.

Ian Kemp, Rotherham Steelworker, said:

“Maybe, just maybe, we need to look at the deeper issues affecting the industry.

“We need, for example, to look at the owners. In the last 40 years we've had an eclectic bunch of owners at the successor companies to the British Steel Corporation.



“Some have been quite good. Some not so good but at least honest. Then there’s been the cowboys, charlatans and crooks. That’s privatisation for you. You never know what you’re going to get.

“Government policies need examining. Not just those specific to the steel industry. But, things like energy and transport policies.

“Look at the high cost of bills paid to our foreign owned energy firms that subsidise the bills of our competitors.

“Steel is an ideal commodity to be transported by rail. One of the mills where I work was even set up to be able to use canals. And yet, most steel is transported by road. Hardly the most efficient, cost effective or greenest option.

“Amongst the gloom, however, there is one beacon of hope.

“Sheffield Forgemasters. They’re thriving. And the only difference between them and the others, and make of it what you will, is, they’ve been nationalised.

“Save our steel.”

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