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Nokia and Asia



The outrage over Nokia's decision to end mobile-phone production in Bochum, Germany, continues, with politicians there calling for a boycott of Nokia handsets and employees demanding that Nokia's decision be reversed. The result is just as predictable as the short-lived outrage that accompanied LG.Philips' decision to pull out of a TV-set investment in Moravia. Nokia, like LG.Philips, will essentially be able to do as it sees fit. And so it should be, say free-marketeers, who argue that the Nokia case is a wake-up call for Germany and its overpaid workers. What's missing from the debate is an appreciation of the role Asian suppliers are playing in the job-killing. EU assembly jobs might be moving to CEE, but most of the high-value production is still much farther East and will remain there until the EU confronts the Asian invasion. In the meantime, the CR and Romania can "delight" in being a just-in-time assembly point between Asia and the rest of Europe.

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