



Recommendation 76 (1955)¹

Measures to be taken to enable local authorities to meet the new responsibilities arising from the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

Considering that the effects, both present and future, of the European Coal and Steel Community on certain population centres in Member States, possibly entailing the partial or total disappearance of the principal activities of certain municipalities and sometimes of whole regions, the depopulation of certain mining areas, the short or long-term unemployment of large sections of their population and, finally, the influx into the more productive areas of fresh manpower, give rise to difficult problems of adjustment and housing;

Considering how important and arduous are the new tasks confronting, either now or in the future, local authorities in such areas, since they must face up to certain problems arising within the sphere of their concern and affecting those whose interests they represent, whether it is a question of promoting new forms of economic activity in conformity with Article 56 (b) of the Treaty establishing the E. C. S. C., of assisting people temporarily deprived of employment and necessarily undergoing vocational re-training or resolved to settle down elsewhere, or, finally, of solving the housing difficulties caused by the influx of new population ;

Believing that, whereas coal and steel problems in member countries of E. C. S. C. are the proper province of the organs of the Community, the consequences of the activities of E. C. S. C. on the life, structure and duties of European municipalities fall within the competence of the Council of Europe, which, by the establishment of the Special Committee on Municipal and Regional Questions, is the sole political body in Europe able usefully to deal with local problems resulting from the operation of European institutions ;

Being convinced that the experiment represented by the European Coal and Steel Community is of major importance for the future unification of the fifteen member countries, and being desirous that this first experiment shall not have the effect of encouraging certain present-day tendencies towards centralisation and concentration which run counter to the essential characteristics of Western civilisation, based as it is on local self-government and the diversity and harmonious geographical distribution of all forms of activity ;

Desirous that, within the scope of this new institution, local authorities may profitably exercise their special function as a convenient and authoritative intermediary between man and mechanised industry, particularly by intervening with all the deliberation and understanding necessitated by such delicate matters as the transfer of population, employment or readaptation ;

Finding that the Statute of the E. C. S. C., subject to certain conditions, does not preclude such intervention by local authorities, which might well play a useful part in the operation of the Community, for instance in the housing of coal and steel workers, in their readaptation, in providing assistance to those who agree to be transferred to other regions, or in setting up new industries capable of absorbing local workers who have become unemployed ;

1. This Recommendation was adopted, by the Assembly at its 9th Sitting, on 9th July, 1955 (see [Doc. 318](#), draft Recommendation of the Special Committee on Municipal and Regional Affairs and Explanatory Memorandum by M. Radius, Rapporteur).



Believing that it is primarily a matter for representatives of local communities, whose principal industries, whether mines or steel works, may cease operation or curtail their activities to an alarming extent as a result of measures taken by the High Authority, to organise, promote and direct, in their area, new activities capable of assuring not only the productive re-employment of local workers under the conditions laid down in Article 56 of the treaty setting up the E. C. S. C., but also the economic survival of their region, and that the Governments concerned, as well as the High Authority, should draw up plans for new industries with due regard to the views of the local authorities ;

Considering that the re-adaptation of workers unemployed as the result of the introduction of new processes or equipment or of methods of concentration must be closely harmonised with local conditions, in particular with available employment in other industries in the area, and that the High Authority, subject to the agreement of the Council of Ministers of E. C. S. C. may, in the words of its own members speaking to the Committee on Social Questions of the Consultative Assembly on 29th January, 1954, co-operate with local authorities in the organisation and financing of vocational training centers ;

Bearing in mind that the High Authority of the E. C. S. C., according to the statements of its Members, in particular before the Social Affairs Committee of the Common Assembly on 7th January, 1954, so far as workers' housing is concerned, is endeavouring in the various member countries to encourage the construction of dwellings, and, further, recalling statements by the same Members of the High Authority before the Committee on Social Questions of the Consultative Assembly on 29th January, 1954, in accordance with which, subject to the unanimous concurrence of the Council of Ministers, as stipulated in Article 54 (paragraph 2) of the treaty setting up the E. C. S. C., the High Authority may assist in financing works and installations undertaken by local authorities and in the housing of workers in the coal and steel industries ;

Convinced that effective assistance to transferred workers could be provided by local authorities, which, in order to solve the delicate problems of adjustment and avoid the dangers attendant upon the uprooting of workers from their normal environment, could establish close and unbroken contacts and, indeed, many ties of friendship between native and adoptive municipalities or regions, by application of the "pairing " system ;

Firmly supporting, in general, the principle that no measure which commits a local authority should be taken by any central Government without prior consultation with the representatives of that authority,

Recommends that the Committee of Ministers should obtain the assurance of the Governments concerned that they will :

1. In regard to the creation of new industries capable of assuring the re-employment of workers
 - a. draw up programmes for the transformation or creation of industries capable of assuring the re-employment of workers (see Section 23 (3) of the Convention containing the Transitional Provisions) in close co-operation with the local authorities concerned, either through the medium of inter-municipal syndicates or of regional adjustment committees to be established for the purpose, composed of workers'and employers' representatives of the various sectors of the local economy as well as the local intelligentsia, and directed by municipal officials of the areas where the coal or steel industries are faced with difficulties ;
 - b. entrust such intermunicipal syndicates or regional committees with the task of directing and supervising in their own areas the execution of these programmes ;
2. In regard to re-adaptation
 - a. delegate by preference to the local authorities (municipalities and regional councils) of these areas, the responsibility of organising vocational training centres for the re-adaptation of local labour required to change employment ;
 - b. invite the High Authority to grant to such local training centres the financial assistance laid down in Article 56 of the Treaty and in Section 23 of the Convention containing the Transitional Provisions, under the conditions specified therein ;
3. In regard to the housing of workers
 - a. empower local authorities (municipalities and regional councils) in those coal and steel-producing areas where a demand for labour exists to establish contact with the High Authority so that those who so desire may, with the financial assistance of the High Authority as laid down in Article 54 (paragraph 2) of the Treaty setting up the E. C. S. C., be authorised to build houses for coal and steel workers on the same terms as contractors, cooperative societies and private firms and, indeed, with a priority over the latter ;

- b. invite the High Authority to approve measures already instituted by such local authorities in regard to workers' housing ;
 - c. arrange for wide representation of local authorities in the joint committees set up in each basin to examine, as planned by the High Authority, the comparative cost of building workers' dwellings in the various regions of the Community ;
 - d. invite the joint committees to establish close contact with the municipality on whose territory the committee is to build ;
4. In regard to psychological problems raised by transferred workers
 - a. encourage the municipalities concerned to take the necessary steps either to prepare the workers for moving to other districts - their agreement having been obtained- or to welcome workers from other areas, in a spirit of understanding favourable to the solution of the social and psychological problems resulting from migration ;
 - b. encourage the municipalities, in particular in the areas where the workers formerly lived, by means of a judiciously considered "pairing" system, to establish close relations with their counterparts in the reception areas, to foster constant exchanges and, in a general manner, sundry ties of friendship which will contribute towards dispelling the feeling of homesickness and isolation, always deplorable in its results ;
 - c. afford every possible assistance and facility to such "pairings " ;
 - d. authorise the High Authority to sponsor such measures and such "pairings " and supply the requisite material assistance, and authorise it, in general, to establish the necessary contacts with the municipalities concerned, so that the difficult but essential work of adapting the transferred workers to their new surroundings may be brought to a successful conclusion ;
5. In general
 - a. take the necessary steps to ensure that no measure likely to involve the major interests of a local community, municipality, departement or region shall be instituted by the High Authority or by themselves without prior consultation with the appropriate local authority ;
 - b. institute an immediate study of the measures necessary to secure the representation or participation, as the case may be, of local authorities affected by the activities of the E. C. S. C. in the latter's Consultative Committee or, failing that, in the consultations for which provision is made under Article 46 of the Treaty.