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Reply to the Third General Report of the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community

Motion for a resolution[1]
Committee on Economic Affairs and Development
Mr Gerard de GEER, Sweden

1. 1955 - 7th Session - Second part

Draft Resolution[2]

1. The Consultative Assembly thanks the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community for the transmission of the Third General Report on the activity of the Community. It regards it as the duty of the Consultative Assembly to scrutinize the activities of the E. C. S. C, in particular as they affect other member countries, as part of the conception of the Council of Europe as the general political framework for European economic policy.

2. The Assembly is gratified to note the progress made during 1954 in the production and exchange of coal and steel within the Community as recorded in the Report. It would urge that the High Authority in its next general report discuss this development in relation to the rise of production and trade in other sectors both within and outside the Community. Moreover, it hopes to see in that report the High Authority's estimate of the light which this progress may shed on the efficacy of the methods used to obtain it.

3. The Assembly has been glad to note the attention which the High Authority has given to the problem of cartels. It looks forward to the High Authority's success in giving substance in this field to the spirit of the Treaty instituting the E. C. S. C.

4. The Assembly notes with satisfaction that the High Authority has been able over the past eighteen months to make further progress towards the establishment of a competitive common market by its action in the field of manpower mobility and of international through-rates of railway transport charges. The Assembly looks forward to new advances in these spheres, and it suggests that the time may soon be ripe for consultation between the High Authority and the Governments of neighbouring countries with a view to extending the measures taken in these specific fields, on a basis of reciprocity, so as to cover eventually all the countries of Europe.

5. The Assembly welcomes the entry into force on 23rd September, 1955 of the Agreement of Association between the High Authority and the United Kingdom, which it regards as a basis for fruitful collaboration in the future. The Assembly hopes that following this development the High Authority and other countries may find themselves able to devise the means whereby any problems arising between them can be speedily and satisfactorily settled, and y/hereby new forms of mutually advantageous co-operation can be worked out and implemented.

6. The Assembly draws the attention of the High Authority and that of Member Governments to the important reciprocal relation between the long-term investment and production plans of the Community and those of the other countries of Europe. It expresses confidence that the other countries chiefly involved will be willing and able to have fruitful exchanges of information and of views with the High Authority on these long-term problems, whether through permanent organs of association or through other channels.

7. The Assembly recognises that the establishment of the Community by its very nature implies a tightening of economic ties between the participating countries. It, nevertheless, reaffirms its hope that this development will never result in the loosening or obstruction of trade relations across the Community's boundaries.

8. As in the past, the Community's export policy remains a major preoccupation of the Assembly. While it is true that the export prices of the Community tended to be below prices on the common market at the outset of the revival in steel demand in the middle of 1954, the Assembly is, nevertheless, concerned that, with common market prices constant, export prices should have been raised in some cases by 25 % and more over the past year. The Assembly continues to watch the development of these prices and the discussions of this issue both within and outside G. A. T. T. with lively interest.

9. The Assembly also expresses its concern over the present shortage of coke and the upward pressure on coke prices. It is however glad to note the measures taken by the High Authority to relieve the shortage by social measures designed to attract more manpower to the pits, by experiments in the coking of coal hitherto regarded as unsuitable for the purpose, and by the import of American coking coal to meet peak demand.

10. In conclusion, the Assembly wishes to stress once more the importance which it attaches to the successful functioning and development of the European Coal and Steel Community, not only on account of its immediate importance to the sectors within its competence, but also as a pilot project already tackling some of the problems of overall integration, and as a rich source of experience providing object lessons on the methods to be adopted in other sectors and in overall integration in the future, be it within the six countries of the Community or within a wider European framework.

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2. See 27th Sitting, 27th October, 1955 (Draft Resolution adopted) and Resolution 91.