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

Report
Committee on Economic Affairs and Development
Rapporteur: Mr Karl CZERNETZ, Austria

Draft Resolution

1. The Consultative Assembly thanks the High Authority for the transmission of its Sixth General Report, of which it has taken note with keen interest.

2. The Assembly stresses the imperative need for the High Authority to exercise its powers to the full with a view to alleviating the repercussions upon the coal and steel industries of the general slow-down in economic activity over the past eighteen months.

3. The Assembly notes with particular concern the continued increase in pithead stocks of coal in the Community; asks that the fullest information be provided in the next Annual Report on what the High Authority has been able to do to remedy this situation; and hopes also that it will re-examine the assumptions underlying its long-term coal policy in the light of recent experience so as to minimise the risk of a recurrence of such a situation.

4. The Assembly notes the freeing of the scrap market, undertaken after the publication of the Report, and welcomes this step as a move towards a freer economy.

5. The Assembly is gratified to learn that it has finally proved possible to conclude an Agreement on Rhine River Navigation, and that Switzerland has subsequently acceded to this Agreement. It urges the High Authority to make every effort to follow up this achievement by the rapid conclusion of the protracted negotiations concerning an agreement on waterways west of the Rhine.

6. The Assembly expresses its general confidence that with the entry into operation of the European Economic Community the High Authori ty will find enhanced opportunities for carrying out its tasks under the ECSC Treaty, both as regards general economic and social policies and in more specifically defined fields, such as conditions of competition, transport and manpower,

7. The Assembly is gratified to learn of the continued development of relations between the Community and third countries; in particular, it welcomes the conclusion of a tariff agreement with the United Kingdom and the establishment by Greece of direct diplomatic relations with the High Authority.

8. The Assembly appreciates that the harmonised external customs tariff for coal and steel products, instituted in February 1958, involves a reduction of the average tariff protection afforded by earlier national tariffs. Nevertheless, it regrets that it should have been found necessary to supplement the harmonised tariff with duties of the nature of " geographical protection " vis-a-vis two member countries.

9. The Assembly, recalling paragraph 8 of its Resolution 132 (1957) in reply to the Fifth General Report, is pleased to note that the previous gap between the agreed export prices of Community producers for steel products and internal prices has now been eliminated by a decline in the former prices.

10. The Assembly stresses that the paramount interest of Europe is to attain the highest degree of economic integration and, at the same time, to avoid an economic division of free Europe; it therefore expresses its hope that the negotiations for the creation of a European Economic Association comprising the six members of the E.E.C. and all t he other OEEC countries will be continued and successfully concluded as soon as possible, and asks the High Authority to do all in its power to help achieve these objectives.