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Reply to the Fourth 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. 1956 - 8th Session - Second part

DRAFT RESOLUTION

1. The Consultative Assembly thanks the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community for the transmission of its Fourth General Report on the activities of the Community. It regards it as its duty to review all the activities of E. C. S. C, in particular as they affect those of its member countries which do not belong to E. C. S. C.

2. The Assembly is pleased to note the progress which has been made during 1955 in expanding the production and trade of steel within the Community. It also appreciates the efforts made, in view of the pressure on scrap supplies, increasingly to substitute the use of raw iron for that of scrap in steelworks. At the same time the Assembly is concerned to note the inadequate expansion of hard-coal production, which has entailed a growing pressure on the common coal market. The Assembly is confident that the High Authority will do its utmost to contribute to increasing coal and coke production by providing incentives to open up new pits.

3. The Assembly welcomes the progress achieved by the High Authority in the improvement of competitive conditions within the Common Market and urges continued action as regards cartels.

4. The Assembly is gratified to learn of the wider application of international railway through-rates within the Community and of the successful negotiations with Switzerland on the introduction of such rates for coal and steel traffic between Member States of the Community across Swiss territory.

5. The Assembly welcomes the entry into force of the Agreement of Association with the United Kingdom and takes note with satisfaction of the first joint consideration of conditions on the coal and steel markets. While finding the attitude of reserve maintained by both sides in the initial period of this new venture understandable, the Assembly hopes that continued collaboration will lead to the adoption of concrete measures in the common interest.

6. The Assembly recognises that the establishment of a common market in coal and steel implies very close general economic relations among the participating States. The Assembly expresses the hope that this fact will, nevertheless, not lead to any weakening of economic ties with non-member countries and that the supply of coal, steel and scrap to such non-member countries will not suffer unreasonably from shortages arising within the common market.

7. The Assembly, recognising that in present economic conditions a rise in prices can hardly be avoided, and that the price increases made during 1955 were, on the whole, of moderate proportions, continues to follow the development of export prices of Community goods with close interest and is confident that the High Authority will pay due attention to the necessity of avoiding a progressively widening gap between the internal and the external prices of coal and steel.

8. The Assembly continues to follow with special interest the work of the Community in the social field. It trusts that the agreement (envisaged under Article 69 of the Treaty) to abolish all restrictions on the movement between Member States of workers with recognised qualifications in the coal and iron and steel industries will shortly be ratified by all Member Governments and thus come into effect.

9. The Assembly welcomes the measures taken by the High Authority in the housing field but considers that more substantial efforts should be made in this direction, particularly as regards the provision of finance.