

January 31, 1967

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COMMON MARKET COAL OUTPUT FALLS

WASHINGTON, D. C., January 31 -- Coal production in the European Common Market fell off more sharply last year than at any time since the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1952.

A year-end review from ECSC headquarters in Luxembourg reported a 6.2% drop from 1965 Community coal production. Last year's output of 210 million metric tons compared with 239 million tons in 1952 reflected a continuing trend away from coal as a principal energy source in western Europe.

In 1952, coal represented 75% of the total energy consumed annually in the Six, with oil supplying 10% and natural gas and hydroelectric power supplying the remainder. In 1966, only 41% of the Common Market's energy needs were furnished by coal as compared to 48% by oil and the balance by natural gas, hydroelectric, and nuclear power.

The steepest drop in production came in the Netherlands and Belgium, where output fell by 12%. In the two Benelux countries and in the Federal Republic of Germany, employment in the coal mines declined by more than 10% in 1965. The general decrease in production occurred in the face of a decline in coal imports and a still further rise in pithead stocks, which climbed to a record of about 32 million metric tons.

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