

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

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ORAL QUESTION (0-13/83)

with debate pursuant to Rule 42 of the Rules
of Procedure

by Mrs HOFFMANN, Mrs DE MARCH, Mrs LE ROUX,
Mrs POIRIER, Mr FERNANDEZ, Mr FRISCHMANN,
Mr DAMETTE and Mr WURTZ

to the Commission of the European Communities

Subject : The situation and prospects in the
iron and steel sector

From 1974 to 1981, 247,000 jobs were lost in the
European iron and steel industry and the Commission
forecasts the loss of a further 150,000 jobs in the
period 1982-1983.

In its general objectives, the Commission estimates
that the iron and steel industry will have a surplus
production capacity of about 30% in 1985 (28.5% for
crude steel and 33.2% for finished products) and
that by that date 56 million tonnes of the Community's
crude steel capacity and 50 million tonnes of its
capacity in finished products will have to be written off.

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PE 84.254

1. (a) Does not the Commission consider, with regard to the need to combat unemployment, that it should encourage the development of the iron and steel industry within the context of a global and balanced policy of growth? In view of its proposals for the recovery of productive investment, can the Commission state to what extent these proposals are relevant to the iron and steel industry and what it intends to do to boost growth in the countries of the EEC?
- (b) The Commission justifies its restructuring programme on the basis of the level of demand. Does it not consider it necessary to endeavour to boost steel consumption in the countries of the EEC by recommending that wages and incomes be maintained and raised to help bring about an upturn particularly in the principal steel-consuming industries, namely, cars, engineering and building?
2. (a) Can the Commission explain how it manages accurately to quantify its restructuring objectives when its calculation of production capacities appears to be erroneous and has given rise to serious doubts, the ECSC Consultative Committee having expressed the view that the Commission calculated surplus product capacity on the basis of an inquiry carried out in 1981 without regard to the closures already scheduled in the restructuring plans?
- (b) Can the Commission state that the restructuring policy that it wishes to implement does not entail risks for the future given that it is difficult to forecast the future steel requirements in view of the difficulties involved in making reliable forecasts and the technological and economic developments taking place during the crisis? Should there be a recovery or an upturn as in the coal sector, is there not a risk that the iron and steel industry may have a shortfall in production capacity in 10 or 15 years' time, or even earlier?