

EUROPEAN COAL AND STEEL COMMUNITY

HIGH AUTHORITY

DELEGATION IN THE
UNITED KINGDOM
23 Chesham Street
LONDON S. W. 1
Tel. SLOane 0456 & 0457

INFORMATION SERVICE

LUXEMBOURG
Tel: 29241 ext. 447 & 448

INFORMATION OFFICE
IN THE USA
220 Southern Building
WASHINGTON 5 D. C.
Tel. NAational 8. 7067

PRESS RELEASE

The High Authority and the Ruhr Coal-Selling Organizations

Luxembourg, February 25, 1960: The High Authority has told the joint office of the three Ruhr coal-selling agencies, Präsident, Mausegatt and Geitling, that it is ready to prolong the existing Ruhr coal sales organization beyond the end of February if it should prove impossible to set a new system in motion before the start of the new coal year on April 1. On February 29, under present rulings, the existing organization would be dissolved and the Ruhr firms would regain sales freedom. The High Authority stated, in a letter delivered today, that it was ready to prolong the present system "to avoid any solution of continuity between the sales system now in force and that which would eventually succeed it." Any extension of the current situation, the letter continued, would be strictly limited in time. The High Authority added that it would take a decision on the future system for Ruhr coal sales as soon as it had received an application for authorization from the Ruhr.

The Secretary of State for Economic Affairs of the German Federal Republic, Ludger Westrick, discussed the subject of Ruhr coal sales with High Authority Vice-President Albert Coppé and with High Authority members Fritz Hellwig and Pierre-Olivier Lapie in Luxembourg yesterday and this morning.

The High Authority was also seeing representatives of the Ruhr coal producers this afternoon for an exchange of views. These talks are likely to be followed by a series of further meetings.

On Tuesday, February 23, the High Authority discussed the organization of Ruhr coal sales with representatives of the German miners' union, IG Bergbau. IG Bergbau made it clear to the High Authority that its position, which it based on social considerations, was similar to that taken by the Ruhr coal producers. It presented the High Authority with a memorandum demanding the

establishment of a single sales organization for all the coal mines of the Ruhr. IG Bergbau expressed anxiety over what it considered the possible consequences for the miners of the High Authority's view that the application for authorization of a single sales organization, as submitted by the producers, was incompatible with the ECSC Treaty's anti-cartel provisions.

In reply, the High Authority reminded the trade union representatives that it has already stated unequivocally that it did not consider it desirable that the existing sales organization in the Ruhr should disappear without replacement. That was why it was necessary to examine what kind of selling system - possibly for a limited period only - would be capable of solving the structural crisis and at the same time compatible with the aims and provisions of the ECSC Treaty. The High Authority pledged that, in the search for a solution, the interests of the miners would be fully taken into account.

The three Ruhr coal-selling agencies, set up in April 1956, following a High Authority decision abolishing the monolithic sales cartel Georg, on December 12 last year submitted an application to re-establish a single sales agency for Ruhr coal. This application was rejected by the High Authority on February 11.