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NEW HOUSING PROGRAMME FOR WORKERS IN ECSC INDUSTRIES¹ · SEC (74) 4327

The Commission has approved the carrying out of an 8th programme of financial assistance for housing intended for the personnel in the European Coal and Steel Community industries. This programme will cover the next four years and will be carried out in two phases, 1975/76 and 1977/78. It has been decided to earmark for the first phase of operations a credit of 25 million u.a. to be taken from the special budgetary reserve of the ECSC.

The assent of the Council will now be asked in accordance with Article 54 of the ECSC Treaty.

The seven earlier programmes and three experimental ones phased over the past 17 years permitted first the High Authority and later the Commission to contribute to the financing of the construction of 129,472 dwellings and, more recently, to the modernisation of 9,702 dwellings for miners and iron and steel workers. (For details see Annexe.)

Period of reorganisation

These programmes, which were originally set up in response to the general housing shortage, have at a later stage helped the ECSC industries through an increasingly difficult period of reorganisation. For example, the movement of iron and steel industries to the coast would have been impossible if there had not been a simultaneous programme of construction of new housing in the vicinity of such new iron and steel complexes as Ijmuiden in the Netherlands, Bremen in Germany, Taranto in Italy and Fos and Dunkirk in France. As regards the three new Member States, it was only in 1974 that the coal and steel industries in these countries were able to begin to benefit from Community assistance for housing.

The Community schemes have been highly appreciated by those concerned, namely, the ECSC firms which pay the levy which helps to finance the assistance and the trade unions whose members benefit from the social effects. Both parties have urged that the programmes be continued.

The advantages

For the firms concerned the advantages can be summed up as:

help towards the provision of housing made necessary by expansion in the steel sector;

enabling collieries which are remaining active to engage and retain sufficient staff for further lengthy periods - this is an especially important factor in view of the upswing in coal production due to the energy crisis;

facilitating the re-housing of miners who have had to take work in other collieries as a result of pit closures.

For the workers, the Community scheme is of benefit because it considerably lightens the rent or mortgage burden which they would otherwise incur due to the steady increase in land prices, the high level of interest and the steep increase in building costs. The Community low interest loans usually cover about 20% of the cost of new housing and between 25 and 35% of the cost of modernisation.

The Commission, for its part, has progressively adapted its aid as required. The increased demands made by the siting of iron and steel industries on coasts have already been mentioned. The Commission has also broadened its action to cover the modernisation of old dwellings in the traditional coal and steel regions and even to cover exceptionally the purchase of existing houses.

Furthermore, several experimental programmes (an architectural competition in connection with urban prefabricated housing schemes, etc.) and ECSC pilot schemes (hostels and dwellings for migrant workers) have aroused much interest beyond the coal and steel sectors.

FINANCING OF THE 7 NORMAL AND 3 EXPERIMENTAL ECSC PROGRAMMES (position on 15 October 1974)

in u.a.

Country	Commission resources		Additional resources *	Total	Number of dwellings
	Special reserve	Loan Fund			
GERMANY	59,542,896	13,240,000	133,090,875	205,873,771	84,972 ¹
BELGIUM	5,969,795	22,950,205	2,300,000	31,220,000	7,889
FRANCE	33,130,450	642,348	13,140,540	46,913,338	26,037 ²
ITALY	11,455,200	8,115,200	11,180,000	30,750,400	6,175
LUXEMBOURG	3,050,000	1,700,000	2,430,000	7,180,000	983
NETHERLANDS	7,228,730	2,587,514	7,298,729	17,114,973	5,465 ³
UNITED KINGDOM	4,000,000	-	-	4,000,000	6,000 ⁴
IRELAND	500,000	-	-	500,000	190 ⁵
DENMARK	666,667	-	333,333	1,000,000	125
COMMUNITY	125,543,738	49,235,267	169,773,477	344,552,482	137,836

* Includes other resources obtained by the Commission.

¹ 84,972 dwellings of which 686 modernisations.² 26,037 dwellings of which 2,680 modernisations.³ 5,465 dwellings of which 232 modernisations.⁴ Total modernisations.⁵ 190 dwellings of which 104 modernisations.