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THE HIGH AUTHORITY

PROGRAMMES BASED ON FORECASTS FOR THE FOURTH QUARTER OF 1956

I. Introduction

The " programmes giving forecasts for guidance " (Article 46 of the Treaty) of the production, consumption, exportation and importation of coal and steel during the fourth quarter of 1956 are based on the following considerations as to the general development of the economic situation in the countries of the Community.

A. General Economic Development

Economic activity in the Community countries continues to show an upward trend. The process of expansion, however, is slowing down somewhat, inasmuch as the rate of increase over the corresponding period of the previous year is not so high as it was in 1955. This development is more marked in some countries than in others. The relatively lower rate of increase appears to be mainly attributable to developments in the German Federal Republic; in other countries, particularly France and Italy, the drop is slighter.

The chief symptoms of this development, so far as they can be discerned up to now, are a shortage of manpower, full utilization of existing production capacities in several sectors of the economy, and, consequently, a slowing-down in the rate of increase of productivity, accompanied by a rapid rise in wages, and an adjustment of the enterprises' profits to this change in the costs-versus-earnings position. In addition, we have to note the measures adopted by the various governments to cushion the effects of the boom.

Another sign of the recent trend could be the relatively greater activity in the consumer-goods and " general services " sectors. Again, in a number of countries, especially France and Western Germany, public consumption is increasing more markedly than heretofore. The indices for consumer-goods production are rising more steeply in most countries than they were a year ago, and the retail-trade turnover also shows a sharp increase.

At the same time, the slight upward trend in the prices of textiles, household articles, services and certain foodstuffs in a number of countries would appear to confirm that an effective demand is bringing about internal changes in the structure of the expansion. If this development continues, it is probable that the rates of increase in the investment sector will no longer be so greatly in excess of the rates of increase in general economic activity as previously.

Overall Industrial Production

INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION OF THE COMMUNITY

(*exclusive of the building trade and foodstuffs industries*)

(*1953=100*)

	1st quarter		2nd quarter		3rd quarter		4th quarter	
	Index	Rate of increase in %	Index	Rate of increase in %	Index	Rate of increase in %	Index	Rate of increase in %
1954	105·6	8·6	112·5	10·9	107·5	12·6	119·5	12·8
1955	120·2	13·8	127·1	13·0	120·8	12·4	133·1	11·4
1956	130·0	8·2	139·0	9·6	131·0[1]	9·0	—	—

[1] July only. Rates of increase over previous years were: July 1954, 13%; July 1955, 12%; July 1956, 9%.

Taken from the High Authority's *Bulletin Statistique*.

The industrial-production index in July was eight points below the average for the second quarter of 1956, and probably dropped further during August. In the fourth quarter of this year industrial production will increase considerably as a result of seasonal factors, in any event more markedly than in the first three quarters (high production of basic materials, completion of building operations in hand, high output of foodstuffs, etc.). From the general economic point of view, however, the slowing-down process noted above seems likely to persist. If we measure developments exclusive of all seasonal influences by the difference between general economic activity or industrial production for the quarter in question and for the corresponding quarter of the previous year, we obtain a probable rate of increase of 7–9% for the fourth quarter of 1956 over the fourth quarter of 1955.

The introductory analysis suggests that the changes observed in the basic trends will continue. If this proves to be the case,

(*a*) the turnover in those sectors of the economy which produce for the home market and for export will rise less markedly in respect of home sales than in respect of exports. Recent developments as regards new orders from the home market and from abroad, so far as relevant figures have been published, confirm this tendency;

(*b*) we should then have reason to expect a continued increase in consumer-goods production;

(*c*) furthermore, it seems likely that an increasing proportion of the demand will be in respect of the general-services sector, which has only a limited influence on industrial production;

(*d*) we may expect a relative increase in public consumption.

B. Developments in Some Main Branches of Industry

1. *Metal-processing industry*

PRODUCTION OF THE METAL-PROCESSING INDUSTRY

(*1953=100*)

	1st quarter		2nd quarter		3rd quarter		4th quarter	
	Index	Rate of increase in %	Index	Rate of increase in %	Index	Rate of increase in %	Index	Rate of increase in %
1954	106	+ 6·0	116	+11·5	108	+14·9	122	+16·1
1955	126	+19·0	136	+17·2	128	+18·5	142	+16·2
1956	142	+12·9	154	+13·2				

Taken from the High Authority's *Bulletin Statistique*.

The term " metal-processing industry " covers a large number of sectors (which do not altogether coincide in the different countries) absorbing, either direct or through dealers, three-fifths or four-fifths of the Community's total internal supplies of ordinary steels. Some of the industries in this group are dealt with below.

The production of the metal-processing industry had admittedly been increasing hitherto faster than overall industrial production, but the slowing-down tendency already noted is nevertheless particularly in evidence in this sector. The increase of production over that for the corresponding period in the previous year was 18·5% in the third quarter of 1955 and only 13·2% in the second quarter of 1956. For the general considerations listed above, we may reckon that in the fourth quarter of 1956 the level of production in these industries will still be slightly higher than in the second quarter, and approximately 10–11% above the figures for the fourth quarter of 1955.

2. *Automobile industry*

PRODUCTION OF MOTOR-CARS IN COMMUNITY COUNTRIES[1]

(*monthly average in thousands, and variation per cent. as against the corresponding quarter of the previous year*)

	1st quarter		2nd quarter		3rd quarter		4th quarter	
	000	%	000	%	000	%	000	%
				(*a*) Passenger cars				
1954	88·4	+33	96·1	+27	91·9	+27	104·7	+29
1955	113·9	+29	128·0	+34	120·0	+31	137·3	+31
1956	152·0	+34	155·8	+22				
				(*b*) Commercial vehicles				
1954	29·0	+36	29·1	+38	27·3	+28	32·6	+19
1955	33·7	+16	33·5	+15	30·2	+11	36·4	+12
1956	36·4	+ 8	36·8	+10				

[1] Germany, France and Italy only.

Taken from official figures for each country and from the O.E.E.C. General Statistical Bulletin.

The forecasts for the second quarter of 1956 indicated an increase of about 25% over the previous year in the production of passenger cars; the actual increase was 22%, and 10% for commercial vehicles. For the third quarter an increase of 20% over the previous year was predicted in respect of passenger cars, and it seems likely that this figure was in fact attained. If we bear in mind the signs of increasing difficulty on the part of certain works in marketing their production (this applies also to motor-cycles), and also the fact that in Germany at least new orders have recently been barely in excess of the volume of deliveries, it seems reasonable to suppose that there will be a further decline in the rate of increase. It is estimated that the rates of increase will be down to 15–18% for passenger cars and 4–5% for commercial vehicles. In view of the growing difficulties in regard to exports, they may even be lower still, at any rate for passenger cars.

3. *Mechanical engineering*

PRODUCTION OF THE MECHANICAL-ENGINEERING INDUSTRY

(*1953=100*)

	Germany		Belgium		Italy	
	Index	Rate of increase in % of year before	Index	Rate of increase in % of year before	Index	Rate of increase in % of year before
1955						
1st qtr.	123	+22	113	+17	118	—
2nd qtr.	138	+22	119	+18	124	—
3rd qtr.	136	+25	113	+14	115	—
4th qtr.	151	+22	124	+12	131	—
1955						
1st qtr.	142	+15	110	−2·5	134	+14
2nd qtr.	158	+14·5	146	+23	138	+11

Taken from official figures for the countries concerned.

During the second quarter of 1956, production of the German mechanical-engineering industry alone reached the rate of increase on which the forecasts were based 13–15%; in Italy it did not. The corresponding statistics for the other countries are not available.

To give a general indication on the basis of the latest figures for new orders in the mechanical-engineering industry (so far available only for Germany), we may say that the export trade continues flourishing, but that business in the home market is on the same level as last year. There is an overall increase of 7–8% over last year.

Various general considerations and special symptoms suggest that in the fourth quarter of 1956, production of the mechanical-engineering sector will be 8–10% above that for the corresponding quarter of last year.

4. *Shipbuilding*

SHIPBUILDING IN COMMUNITY COUNTRIES

(*ships on the stocks in thousands of tons gross*)

	1st quarter		2nd quarter		3rd quarter		4th quarter	
	000 tons gross	Variation % as against corres-ponding quarter of previous year	000 tons gross	Variation % as against corres-ponding quarter of previous year	000 tons gross	Variation % as against corres-ponding quarter of previous year	000 tons gross	Variation % as against corres-ponding quarter of previous year
1954	1,964	+ 6·0	1,889	− 0·1	1,850	− 7·3	2,057	+ 1
1955	1,964	+ 0	2,154	+14·0	2,316	+25·1	2,238	+ 8·8
1956	2,370	+20·7	2,601	+21·0				

Taken from the O.E.E.C. General Statistical Bulletin.

The optimistic view of the trend of production in the shipbuilding industry expressed in the forecasts has proved correct: in fact, it is evident that the production capacities of the shipyards proper (shipways) do not determine the rate of progress in shipbuilding. Careful sub-division of working methods ensures considerable adjustability to the increasing number of new orders.

The increase in activity in the shipyards over the corresponding quarter of last year was approximately 21% for the first and second quarters. There is so far no indication of any appreciable falling-off in the next few months. The rate of increase for the fourth quarter of 1956 over the fourth quarter of 1955 will probably be between 17 and 20%.

5. *Building trade*

(*a*) BUILDING WORK AUTHORIZED

(*in thousands of housing units*)

	1st quarter		2nd quarter		3rd quarter		4th quarter	
	000	Rate of increase in %	000	Rate of increase in %	000	Rate of increase in %	000	Rate of increase in %
1954	246	+29	309	+15	316	+12	322	+10
1955	247	+ 0·4	316	+ 2	323	+ 2	336	+ 4
1956[1]	283	+14·8	328	+ 4				

[1] Figures are for the first and second quarter and are provisional only.

Taken from the E.C.E. Quarterly Bulletin of Housing and Building, Statistics for Europe, and from official figures for the countries concerned.

(*b*) HOUSING UNITS COMPLETED

(*in thousands*)

	1st quarter		2nd quarter		3rd quarter		4th quarter	
	000	Rate of increase in %	000	Rate of increase in %	000	Rate of increase in %	000	Rate of increase in %
1954	117	—	158	—	225	—	381	—
1955	132	+13	173	+ 9·5	238	+ 6	405	+ 6·5
1956[1]	137	+ 4	189	+ 9·5				

[1] See note above.

So far from activity in the building trade falling off, as it was expected to do, in respect both of dwelling-houses and of structural engineering and public buildings, the figures published up to now for the current year do not point to any decline: in fact, in some countries, particularly France, Italy and the Netherlands, there has even been an additional expansion. (In Germany, however, the number of building licences applied for has decreased since the raising of the bank rate.) The number of housing units completed during the second quarter of 1956 was something like 10% above that for the corresponding quarter of 1955.

The number of building licences issued has also gone up sharply: in the first quarter of this year it was nearly 15% above the figure for the same period last year, and in the second quarter still 4% above. The increase in the first and second quarters of 1955 over the first and second quarters of 1954 was only 0·4% and 2% respectively. For some types of structural engineering the rate of increase is also particularly high. Activity on the construction of public buildings is very lively in all countries.

Experience has shown that it is during the fourth quarter that activity in the building trade reaches its seasonal peak; purchases of iron and steel products would appear, from the still somewhat scrappy data now available, to follow a similar seasonal rhythm. This being so, we should be able to count for the last three months of this year on a level of activity in the building trade approximately 8–10% above the corresponding level for last year.

II. Programme for Coal. Fourth quarter, 1956

In accordance with Article 46 of the Treaty, the High Authority has drawn up, on the basis of information furnished by the governments of the member countries, and of consultations and discussions with various government spokesmen and other important representatives, a programme giving forecasts, for guidance, on coal production, consumption, imports and exports for the fourth quarter of 1956.

An examination of the situation reveals a seasonal increase in demand by the power-stations and by private households, together with additional requirements for carbonization purposes. Total requirements during the fourth

quarter are estimated to exceed those for the third quarter by approximately 2,500,000 metric tons. To this must be added an increase of 1,200,000 metric tons in the consumption at the pits (pithead power-stations, miners' coal).

The extra availabilities it is hoped to produce over and above the previous quarter are estimated at only 1,600,000 metric tons, in consequence of a number of conflicting factors. In Germany, the position is satisfactory, thanks to successful recruitment of underground workers; while in France it is hoped that production will rise again as a result of the action taken on August 25 to demobilize and direct miners. In Belgium, on the other hand, the Marcinelle disaster has led to a complete stoppage in the recruitment of workers from abroad, and acted as a check on that of Belgian miners.

Imports from third countries other than the United Kingdom and the United States—*i.e.* mainly from Poland and the Soviet Union—remain unchanged at an estimated total of 800,000 metric tons for the two countries together.

Hard-coal imports from Great Britain have been agreed at 608,000 metric tons following the latest negotiations in the Council of Association between the United Kingdom and the European Coal and Steel Community.

Despite its imports of coal from the United States, originally estimated at 8,300,000 metric tons, the Community's balance-sheet still shows a deficit of over 2m. tons. To meet requirements, therefore, it will have to import something like 10m. metric tons of American coal during the fourth quarter. Imports from the United States during 1956 would thus rise to 30m. metric tons.

These large-scale imports of American coal raise internal problems in view of the disparity in price with Community coal. Certain countries may also be faced with balance-of-payments problems which are likely to become still more acute inasmuch as there seems to be no immediate prospect of solving them.

There is, however, one encouraging feature—the satisfactory position in regard to stocks in most of the big industrial sectors and public services.

As regards coke-oven coke, the Community balance-sheet still shows a deficit of about 400,000 metric tons, as in the last quarter.

The requirements of the iron and steel industry show very little change from the forecasts for the third quarter. The increase in these requirements due to the seasonal upswing in the fourth quarter corresponds approximately to the forecasts concerning reconstitution of stocks in the third quarter.

The following table shows the forecasts for the fourth quarter of 1956 as to the Community's production and the requirements of the various consumer, export and import sectors in respect of hard coal and hard-coal briquettes, coke-oven coke, brown-coal briquettes and low-temperature brown-coal coke.

AVAILABILITIES AND REQUIREMENTS IN SOLID FUELS IN THE COMMUNITY

Fourth Quarter, 1956 (000 metric tons)

	Hard-coal and hard-coal briquettes	Coke-oven coke	B.K.B. and low-temperature brown-coal coke
(1) Hard-coal production	63,100	19,350	4,290
(2) Pitch for briquetting purposes[1] + corrections for low-grade fuels	100	—	—
(3) Collieries' own consumption	7,500	730	110
(4) Miners' Coal	1,700	120	80
(5) Stocks at beginning of quarter	6,700	230	—
(6) Stocks at end of quarter	6,300	230	—
(7) Additions to (+) and withdrawals from (−) stocks (6−5)	−400	—	—
(8) INTERNAL AVAILABILITIES (1+2−3−4)	54,400	18,500	4,100
(9) Imports from			
(*a*) third countries other than the U.S.A.	1,700	20	1,210
(*b*) U.S.A., originally estimated	8,300	—	—
additional	2,000	—	—
(*c*) Total	12,000	20	1,210
(10) TOTAL AVAILABILITIES (8+9*c*)	66,400	18,520	5,310
(11) Apparent consumption	65,100	17,850	5,150
of which			
(*a*) coking-plants	25,700	—	—
(*b*) gasworks	3,270	—	—
(*c*) power-stations	6,860	—	—
(*d*) iron and steel industry	1,250	11,590	220
(*e*) other industries	10,980	2,560	1,200
(*f*) railways	4,800	—	—
(*g*) households	10,900	2,830	3,300
(12) Exports to third countries	1,600	1,150	130
(13) TOTAL REQUIREMENTS	66,700	19,000	5,280

[1] Briquette production minus hard-coal consumption at the briquetting-plants.

III. Programme for Iron and Steel. Fourth quarter, 1956[1]

A feature of the fourth quarter is the marked seasonal upswing in the iron and steel industry: after the temporary slackening in the rate of orders normally observable in the third quarter, the demand for iron and steel products increases, and production, which has also slowed down somewhat as a result of lowered productivity during the summer, takes on a fresh impetus.

[1] For methods employed in drawing up the programmes for iron and steel, and the margins of error on the figures given in them, see *Official Gazette of the Community, April* 30, 1956, *p.* 149, *and July* 19, 1956, *p.* 247.

Now, as regards the existing production capacity and the flow of raw material supplies, the iron and steel industry of the Community is coming up against increasingly serious bottlenecks. These will limit the expansion of the industry's production during the fourth quarter.

As will be seen from the accompanying table, the Community's requirements in imported scrap, which are already perilously high, will show a further substantial increase. The shortage of coke, which was less acutely felt in the third quarter as a result of the seasonal drop in iron and steel production, will be very much in evidence in the fourth. These supply difficulties, which will be sharper in those steel-producing areas of the Community which are least favourably situated in relation to their sources of raw materials, may well keep the Community's iron and steel production below the level indicated by the pig-iron and steel production capacities themselves. But for home and export demand to be fully met it would be necessary for production to be actually above that level.

It is obvious that all those concerned must take vigorous action to reduce the tightness arising from such a situation.

A. Steel

If we take into account the foreseeable number of days worked, the estimated increase in capacity and the trend observed in productivity, the Community's crude-steel production in the fourth quarter of 1956 works out at approximately 14,700,000 metric tons. An additional 300,000 metric tons[1] will be imported during this period.

The growing requirements of the economies of the various Community countries and, in particular, of the steel-processing industries, as revealed in the estimates given in Section I of this programme, will bring the apparent internal crude-steel consumption up to approximately 12·1 million metric tons.

The steady increase in deliveries of iron and steel products to third countries and in new orders from such countries suggests that the level of exports in the fourth quarter will be high, probably in excess of the 2,900,000 metric tons available for the purpose.

B. Pig-Iron

Taking into account the same factors as for steel, we obtain a foreseeable pig-iron production during the fourth quarter of 11,300,000 metric tons. Even if we assume that net imports will total 200,000 metric tons and that only 1m. will be supplied to the foundries, no more than 10,500,000 metric tons of pig-iron will be available for the steelworks. As will be seen in section D below, the Community's scrap deficiency will thereby be increased.

C. Metallurgical Coke

To enable the blast furnaces of the Community to produce to full capacity, and to meet the requirements of the iron and steel industry outside those of the blast-furnaces and sintering-plants, the total amount of coke needed would be 11,600,000 metric tons. However, as was shown in Part II of this programme, this tonnage can only be supplied to the industry in so far as it is found possible to make good the 400,000-ton deficiency in coke-oven coke. The probability

[1] In crude-steel equivalent.

is that a substantial proportion of this deficiency will not be made good, which would mean that production of pig-iron, and hence of steel, will fall below the levels indicated in sections A and B above.

D. Scrap

For pig-iron and steel production to reach the levels just mentioned scrap consumption would total 6,850,000 metric tons.

Even allowing for the increase in works' own arisings and for the seasonal increase in internal scrap recovery, scrap availabilities within the Community will hardly amount to more than 5,950,000 metric tons. 900,000 metric tons will therefore have to be provided either by withdrawals from stocks (which are already almost down to the danger level) or by importation which is becoming more and more difficult and costly.

Furthermore, any increase of the coke deficiency would lead to a rise in the specific consumption of scrap in the blast-furnaces for the purpose of enriching the burden.

The situation is, it should be emphasized, highly disquieting.

E. Iron Ore

In this sector, on the other hand, the position continues reasonably satisfactory: overall requirements may be estimated at 8,700,000 metric tons[1] and the output of saleable ore at 6,100,000.[1] The remainder to be covered totals 2,600,000[1] metric tons, which should not present too much difficulty.

[1] Fe content.

AVAILABILITIES AND REQUIREMENTS IN IRON AND STEEL PRODUCTS AND RAW MATERIALS IN THE COMMUNITY

Fourth Quarter, 1956

(000,000 metric tons)

A. Crude Steel

(1) Production	14·7
(2) Imports	0·3
(3) Total availabilities (1)+(2)	15·0
(4) Apparent internal consumption	12·1
(5) Exports	2·9
(6) Total consumption (4)+(5)	15·0

B. Pig-Iron

(7) Production	11·3
(8) Net imports...	0·2
(9) Consumption at the steelworks	10·5
(10) Remainder available for foundries (7)+(8)−(9) ...	1·0

C. Coke

(11) Availabilities for iron and steel industry	11·6
(12) Consumption for pig-iron production[1]	11·2
(13) Consumption for other purposes of iron and steel production	0·4
(14) Total consumption of the iron and steel industry (12)+(13)...	11·6
(15) Additions to stocks at the steel works (11)−(14) ...	—

D. Scrap[2]

(16) Steelworks' own arisings ...	3·75
(17) Internal recovery	2·2
(18) Total availabilities (16)+(17)	5·95
(19) Blast-furnace consumption	1·2
(20) Steelworks consumption ...	5·65
(21) Total consumption (19)+(20)...	6·85
(22) Remainder to be met from imports and/or withdrawals from stocks (21)−(18)...	0·9

E. Iron Ore (Fe content)

(23) Production of saleable ore...	6·1
(24) Consumption for pig-iron production[1]	8·6
(25) Steelworks consumption ...	0·1
(26) Total consumption (24)+(25)...	8·7
(27) Remainder to be met from net imports and/or withdrawals from stocks (26)−(23)...	2·6

[1] Blast-furnaces and sintering-plants.
[2] Exclusive of independent steel foundries.

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