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EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Report

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and  
Consumer Protection

on the sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth reports of the Steel Industry Safety and  
Health Commission and the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth reports of the  
Mines Safety and Health Commission

Rapporteur: Mr R.T. ELLIS

1.2.2



By letter of 19 January 1978 the President of the European Parliament authorized the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection to draw up a report on the 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th reports of the Steel Industry Safety and Health Commission and the 12th, 13th and 14th reports of the Mines Safety and Health Commission.

On 21 March the committee appointed Mr Ellis rapporteur.

Discussion of the draft report took place on 20 June and 25 September 1978.

At its meeting of 25 September the Committee unanimously adopted the motion for a resolution and explanatory statement.

Present: Mrs Krouwel-Vlam, Chairman; Lord Bethell, Vice-Chairman; Mr Ellis, rapporteur; Mr Alber, Mr Brown, Mr Edwards, Lord Kennet, Mr Lamberts, Mr W. Müller and Mr Noé.

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The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection hereby submits to the European Parliament the following motion for a resolution together with explanatory statement.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

on the 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th reports of the Steel Industry Safety and Health Commission and the 12th, 13th and 14th reports of the Mines Safety and Health Commission.

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th reports of the Steel Industry Safety and Health Commission and the 12th, 13th and 14th reports of the Mines Safety and Health Commission;
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection (Doc.327/78 );
1. Confirms that for the period under review both the Steel Industry Safety and Health Commission and the Mines Safety and Health Commission have managed well, but that because of the staffing, administrative and partly financial difficulties that have arisen they have been unable to cover the whole field of safety and health at work;
  2. Is concerned about the shortage of staff in both organizations considering that the working population is the mainspring of development in the Community and that it should be safeguarded for humanitarian and economic reasons by every possible means;
  3. Deplores the fact that the Mines Safety and Health Commission because of shortage of staff has not been able to extend the correlation of the statistics of the Community of the Six and the United Kingdom to all mineral extracting industries;
  4. States that the Steel Safety and Health Commission due to serious administrative difficulties was unable to hold any meetings of the Commission or its working parties in 1976;

5. Deplores that for financial reasons it has been impossible for the Steel Industry Safety and Health Commission to organize a planned colloquy in 1978 and that its realisation in 1979 depends on whether the Council finally will provide the necessary funds in the next year's budget;
6. Emphasizes the importance of completing the special study into serious accidents started in 1976 by the Steel Industry Safety and Health Commission and scheduled to enter an important and expensive phase in 1979;
7. Notes that the Mines Safety and Health Commission, whose responsibility has been extended in 1974 to all mineral extracting industries, because of staffing reasons has made little progress in implementing this new area;
8. Invites the Mines Safety and Health Commission to devote in the near future more time and attention to health questions, specially to the major problem of dust faced by miners;
9. Calls upon the Steel Industry Safety and Health Commission to report in its next annual report on the different studies carried out or being carried out, i.e. the study on the significance of accident statistics, their comparability and their trends and the special study on major accidents initiated in 1976;
10. Calls upon the Commission and the Council of the European Community to provide the necessary staff and funds to both Safety and Health Commissions in order to enable them to operate properly and efficiently;
11. Points out that until the question of the staffing of these two Commissions is settled, proposing new areas of study or new fields of action is not considered useful;
12. Requests its President to forward this resolution and the report of its committee to the Council and Commission of the European Communities.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENTINTRODUCTION

1. Until 1975 the European Parliament has drawn up reports at regular intervals on the reports of both these Commissions. However, since that date none of the annual reports have been published with considerable delays and it was not considered opportune to continue as in the past. Moreover, the general question of whether or not the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection should draw up reports on reports has been raised.

2. As the reports of both these Safety and Health Commissions are fairly voluminous and contain a large number of statistical tables, perhaps it would be a better idea for the future to have a representative from each of the organizations to come and give a brief outline of the results achieved during a set period than for the rapporteur to have to examine in detail these reports.

3. When the Committee decided to draw up a report only the 12th, 13th and 14th reports of the Mines Safety and Health Commission (covering the years 1974 to 1976) and the 6th, 7th, and 8th reports of the Steel Industry Safety and Health Commission (also 1974 to 1976) were available. The 9th report of the Steel Industry Safety and Health Commission, covering its activities in 1977, has just been published.

STEEL INDUSTRY SAFETY AND HEALTH COMMISSION

4. This body was set up by the ECSC High Authority in 1964 with the aim of encouraging an exchange of experience and research within the Community so that the best ways of tackling safety and health problems in the iron and steel industry could be found.

5. The four reports under review outline the activities of this Commission between 1974 and the end of 1977 i.e. the activities of its various working parties and any special activities organised. A major conclusion that can be drawn from these reports is that fatal accidents in the iron and steel sectors have diminished, whereas minor accidents are on the increase<sup>1</sup>. The

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<sup>1</sup> See annexes I and II

reason for these trends is not known but a number of studies being carried out are examining this problem.

6. Perhaps the most important study being undertaken by the Commission is the study of serious accidents. This study was started in 1977 and was expected to last for 2 or 3 years. It should result in the finalising of a standard questionnaire to be used in surveys on very serious accidents, providing initial information on the categories of causes of very serious accidents and the establishment of a method of research into the causes of such accidents. The next stage of the study which will be undertaken in 1979 could seriously be jeopardised, if the Council will not provide the necessary funds.

7. The 8th report (covering 1976) starts by indicating that 1976 was a year of very little activity for the Steel Industry Safety and Health Commission due to the serious administrative difficulties. It is a fact that the secretariat of this Commission has always been understaffed and attention has been drawn to this on numerous occasions in reports drawn up by the European Parliament. The ludicrousness of the situation was highlighted in 1976 when the only secretary assigned to the secretariat left, with the result that not a single meeting of the Commission or its working parties was held during that year. This is obviously an internal Commission problem but it is surely one that can be solved without too much difficulty. If an organization such as the Steel Industry Commission is to be taken seriously by those whom it purports to help, then it must be given the means to operate efficiently.

8. In the 9th report mention is made of a decision taken by the Health and Safety Commission to organise a colloquy in 1978 on the results of the work being done by the Commission. This would be essentially aimed at those responsible for safety in the iron and steel industries. It is also pointed out that when a similar colloquy was organised in Luxembourg in 1970, over 700 persons from 14 different countries participated and the meeting itself was extremely successful.

9. For financial reasons it was not possible to organize this colloquy in 1978 and it depends on the Budget for 1979 if it can be organized next year. Considering that the prime task of this Health and Safety Commission is to disseminate the information it obtains as a result of exchanges of experience, the Committee thinks that the organization of such a meeting is of prime importance and indeed asks why years have passed since the organization of the last.



MINES SAFETY AND HEALTH COMMISSION<sup>1</sup>

10. The Mines Safety and Health Commission was set up in 1957 following the mine disaster in 1956 in Marcinelle (Belgium) in which 262 miners died. A conference on Safety in Coal Mines was held shortly after the disaster resulting in a report containing recommendations for actions by governments in the field of safety, and it was the task of the Mines Safety Commission to continue the work of this conference and to seek solutions to the problems of safety in coal mines.

11. Since that date the terms of reference of the Mines Safety Commission have been extended to include factors affecting health and to cover all mineral extracting industries. Contrary to the Steel Industry Safety and Health Commission, the Mines Safety and Health Commission submits proposals to the governments of the Member States for the improvement of safety and health and keeps itself informed of any action taken on these proposals. In recent years most of the proposals made by the Mines Safety and Health Commission have, in fact, been incorporated in national legislation.

12. As far as the general activities of the Commission and its working parties are concerned, there is little comment to be made. In fact, the Commission is to be congratulated on having managed to hold so many meetings and to draw up and distribute so many reports in spite of severe staffing difficulties. For example, in 1974 although 77 meetings were held, the secretariat were unable to keep pace with the demands of the Commission and its working parties. It was in this year that the Council of Ministers decided to extend the responsibility of the Mines Safety and Health Commission to all mineral extracting industries.

13. In 1975 we note that the working party on health in mines met only once to study the problems of dust, noise and lighting. The following year, 1976, this working party did not meet at all due to staffing difficulties. It must be pointed out that while the study of major accidents and their causes is extremely worthwhile and must be continued, the major problem facing miners is the problem of dust. It is true to say that overall, pneumoconiosis and silicosis are ultimately more lethal than accidents. The question must be posed as to whether the Mines Safety and Health Commission should not devote more time and attention to health questions.

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<sup>1</sup> For accident statistics see Annexes III and IV

## CONCLUSIONS

14. The committee has no intention of criticising the work done by either of the two Safety and Health Commissions, that on the contrary, both organisations have managed extremely well in spite of the numerous difficulties of staffing that have arisen.

15. The committee further points out, that until the whole question of the staffing of these two organizations is settled once and for all, it does not see the utility of proposing new areas of study or new fields of action for either of the Commissions. It would seem illogical to ask for either an extension of competence or for new tasks to be performed by an organisation which has difficulty in fulfilling the duties already conferred on it.

## STEEL INDUSTRY

Fatal accidents in the Community of Nine

Year	Number of fatalities	Frequency rate (1)	Accidents:production ratio (2)
1974	137	0,13	0,88
1975	110	0,12	0,88
1976	88	0,09	0,86
1977			
1978			
1979			

(1) Number of fatal accidents per million hours worked

(2) Number of fatal accidents per million tonnes of crude steel

Source: Ninth report of the steel industry safety and health commission (1977), Doc. 2164/78

STEEL INDUSTRY

Ann. II

Accidents causing absence from work in the Community of Nine

Year	No. of workers	Accidents resulting in ≥ 1 day's absence			Accidents resulting in > 3 day's absence		Percentage of accidents resulting in between 1 and 3 day's absence
		Number	f.r.(1)	acc:prod. (2)	Number	f.r.(1)	
1974	585.267	90.581	85	582	76.394	72	15,3
1975	568.772	74.854	78	598	63.606	67	14,1
1976	548.446	75.568	80	563	63.069	67	16,2
1977							
1978							

(1) frequency rate : number of accidents per million hours worked

(2) number of accidents per million tonnes crude steel

Source: Ninth report of the steel industry safety and health commission (1977), Doc. 2164/78

MINING INDUSTRY

ANNEX III

D. RECAPITULATION : COMMUNITY OF THE SIX

Year	Extraction (1)	Underground O.M.S. (kg.)	Million man- hours worked	Fatalities	Serious inju- ries (4) (disa- blement for 8 weeks or over)	Fatalities per m. tons	Serious inju- ries (4) per m. tons	Fatalities per m. man- hours	Serious inju- ries per m. man-hours
1958	252 278	1 634	1 260	770	17 074	3,052	67,68	0,610	13,551
1959	240 602	1 708	1 122	622	14 539	2,585	60,43	0,590	12,950
1960	239 967	1 958	1 037	526	13 459	2,192	56,09	0,507	12,966
1961	235 848	2 100	962	527	12 720	2,235	53,93	0,548	13,227
1962	233 233	2 229	901	840 (3) 541 (4)	12 418	3,602 (3) 2,320 (4)	53,24	0,932 (3) 0,600 (4)	13,781
1963	229 769	2 331	849	465	11 686	2,024	50,86	0,547	13,761
1964	235 007	2 395	841	411	11 726	1,749	49,89	0,493	13,860
1965	224 249	2 461	784	410	10 595	1,828	47,25	0,522	13,505
1966	210 189	2 611	698	374	9 247	1,779	43,99	0,536	13,242
1967	189 484	2 824	587	269	7 781	1,420	41,06	0,457	13,246
1968	181 016	3 065	522	240	7 501	1,326	41,44	0,460	14,370
1969	176 749	3 265	476	209	7 222	1,181	40,82	0,438	15,160
1970	170 355	3 442	438	188	6 591	1,104	38,69	0,429	15,047
1971	164 910	3 514	414	182	6 249	1,104	37,89	0,440	15,038
1972	151 809	3 659	369	147	5 763	1,033	26,34	0,399	15,60
1973	139 700	3 755	332	137	5 560	0,981	39,80	0,413	16,77
1974	133 300	3 742	313	143	5 054	1,073	37,91	0,456	16,12
1975	129 100	3 632	319	110	4 795	0,852	37,14	0,35	15,05
1976	125 600	3 710	301	125	4 491	0,995	35,76	0,415	14,92
1977									
1978									

- (1) Net extraction, slurry and dust.
- (2) Incl. Luisenthal explosion.
- (3) Excl. Luisenthal explosion.
- (4) Casualties were unable to resume work for at least eight weeks.

UNITED KINGDOM

1973	130 200	3 598	306	74	490	0,568	3,76	0,242	1,60
1974	109 200	3 260	268	37	417	0,339	3,82	0,138	1,555
1975	127 700	3 493	303	55	522	0,431	4,09	0,181	1,722
1976	122 100	3 407	287	45	2 497 (1) 444	0,369	19,71 (1) 3,64	0,157	8,33 (1) 1,536 (1)
1977									
1978									

Note : It is only possible to compare the figures in table 1 (Community of the Six) with those in table 2, by referring to the explanatory notes in Section IV, paragraphs 4.2.

1) Statistical tables for 1976 following the system of classification used in the Community of Six.

Source: 14th report of the mines safety and health commission for the year 1976

MINING INDUSTRY

ANNEX IV

Accident levels since 1971 (Community of the Six)

	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
4 - 20 days - actual	47 203	40 376	37 384	34 797	33 985	30 643
Frequency rate	113,96	109,31	112,77	110,97	106,67	101,77
Increase/decrease on previous year (%)	-	-4 (s)	-3,17 (s)	-1,6 (s)	-3,9 (s)	-4,8 (s)
21-56 days - actual	21 116	18 531	17 325	15 875	15 454	13 923
Frequency rate	50,98	50,17	52,26	50,62	48,5	46,24
Increase/decrease on previous year (%)	-	-1,58	+4,17 (s)	-3 (s)	-4,2 (s)	-4,8 (s)
more than 56 days - actual	6 249	5 763	5 560	5 054	4 795	4 791
Frequency rate	15,09	15,60	16,77	16,12	15,05	14,92
Increase/decrease on previous year (%)	-	-3,4 (s)	+7 (s)	-4 (s)	-6,7 (s)	-0,8 (s)
Fatalities total actual	182	147	137	143	110	125
Frequency rate	0,440	0,399	0,413	0,456	0,345	0,415
Increase/decrease on previous year (%)	-	-10	-3,9	-10,4	-24	-20
Actual without group-accident (actual group accident)	162 (3)	141 (1)	128 (1)	96 (2)	110 (0)	108 (1)
Frequency rate	0,391	0,382	0,385	0,307	0,345	0,362
Increase/decrease on previous year (%)	-	-2,3	+1%	-21 (s)	+12	+4,9

(s) significant variation