

Address by Karl Heinz Hawner (Luxembourg, 26 January 1973)

Caption: On 26 January 1973, in the Hôtel de ville, Luxembourg, the ECSC Consultative Committee commemorates the 20th anniversary of its first session. On this occasion, Karl Heinz Hawner, President of the Consultative Committee from 1972 to 1973, gives an account of the work already completed by the Committee and outlines the work still to be carried out.

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Address by Mr K. H. Hawner, president of the Consultative Committee

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Two things have prompted us to hold a celebration today in succession to yesterday's 153rd plenary session of the Consultative Committee.

With the recent accession of Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom to the European Communities we have witnessed a truly historical political event. We hope that this will give a real fillip to continuous progress in the process of European unification. Our Consultative Committee has also been expanded by the addition of members from these three countries. We are all extremely happy that some of them were able to take part in yesterday's plenary session and to be present amongst us today, even though they were so recently appointed.

The actual occasion of this celebration, the 20th anniversary of the first session of the Consultative Committee held on 26 January 1953, also causes us to cast our minds back to the beginnings of the Community in this beautiful European capital of Luxembourg with which we have grown so familiar, to the time when the High Authority, Consultative Committee and other European institutions were created.

We are particularly happy to share this celebration with countless political dignitaries and guests from the European Communities and the Grand duchy of Luxembourg.

I welcome in particular His Royal Highness the Grand duke of Luxembourg, represented by the Lord Chamberlain, Mr Guy De Muyser, the Prime Minister of the Grand duchy of Luxembourg, Mr Werner, the Minister of the Economy and the Middle Classes, Mr Mart, the Secretary of State for Social Affairs, M. Santer, the Luxembourg City Magistrate, Mr Bollendorff, and the Vice-President of the Commission of the European Communities, Mr Simonet.

We are greatly honoured by your presence amongst us today.

But we are also happy and gratified to see with us today so many former members of the High Authority and its departments and the Consultative Committee, whose names are very closely connected with our activities of the last twenty years.

I should like to extend a welcome to one of them in particular, Mr Burckhardt, who was the first president of the Consultative Committee and to whom I should like to express my gratitude for his willingness to speak to us on this happy occasion.

If we look back to the enthusiastic beginnings of the European Coal and Steel Community and then consider it as it is today, we shall observe that political realities in the meantime have changed a great deal.

True, the ECSC, as a Community run in accordance with the specific provisions of the Treaty of Paris, has continued unchanged. In particular, its financial autonomy, based on the right to grant loans and the levy drawn from coal and steel enterprises, has remained intact. This autonomy enabled the ECSC, by means of loans and assistance, to promote capital investment and research in these two industries and above all to alleviate the adverse effects which the recession in the mining industry and structural changes in the iron and steel industry had on the employment situation.

But the High Authority as a special legal entity and independent body of the ECSC no longer exists.

Its responsibilities were taken over by the European Commission in Brussels, whose political successes are only too frequently overshadowed by the difficulties which stand in the way of unanimity in the Council.

Furthermore the staff of the former High Authority was cut and its departments scattered, so that only a small part remained in Luxembourg whilst the rest was moved to Brussels and absorbed into the organization of various directorates-general.

No doubt this was necessary for reasons of rationalization and in view of the objective of a transition to a uniform policy, not restricted to coal and steel alone.

But it has certainly contributed to the fact that the Paris Treaty has been forgotten in some areas.

The Consultative Committee however, has not experienced any such transformation. For the simple reason that it is the only independent body of the European Community for Coal and Steel, its importance, and we hope, its influence have rather increased.

Its operating conditions have admittedly become more difficult, because it now has only a small secretariat which can no longer draw support from the administrative infrastructure of the High Authority. But in the quality of its work and the spirit in which it tackles its responsibilities, the Consultative Committee has remained the same.

In the Consultative Committee, the Paris Treaty and ideas of Robert Schuman on which it is based are as alive today as they were in the past. And not least, those of our members who have sat on the Consultative Committee from the very beginning have played a decisive and essential role in preserving an atmosphere of open and fair exchange of opinion, in which the frontiers between the various nationalities and barriers between the different sides of industry have long since been done away with. Individuality of judgement and thought have always played a greater role in the Consultative Committee than the formation of factions.

If we draw up a balance sheet for the last five years, we have held each year about seven plenary sessions of the Consultative Committee and about twice that number of meetings of its permanent or special committees.

At these meetings the Consultative Committee has dealt primarily with coal and steel questions submitted to it by the Commission for consultation in accordance with the provisions of the Paris Treaty.

But thanks to its right of initiative and to the flexible attitude of the Commission, the Consultative Committee has also made known its opinions on other basic problems raised by Community activities in the field of energy policy, industrial policy, regional and social policy, competition policy and transport policy.

Its opinions, reports, resolutions and the comments by its members, recorded in minutes, give a faithful reflection of the constant discussions held on industrial, social and commercial matters concerning coal and steel.

They have repeatedly provided the Commission and the Council with pointers towards rational solutions, geared to the long-term interests of the Community.

Remembering the debate at our plenary session of yesterday I would just recall how strongly the Consultative Committee has always pressed for the creation of a common energy policy covering all energy users and, as part of this, for the preservation of a mining industry which will be as large and productive as possible, both to ensure supplies to the consumer and in the interests of mining employees and regions.

The three new member countries and their representatives who have joined us will not only have to acclimatize to the organizational system of the European Community and its body of laws, but also to the particular spirit of this Paris Treaty which has so animated our activities in previous years.

In this spirit and with the wealth of experience acquired hitherto, they will enter the common market for coal and steel, which is a market of open, fair and honest competition, clarified and protected by the specific provisions of the Paris Treaty and unperturbed by competition anomalies of the kind which may be caused

by the structure and measures of national economic policies.

The very convictions which have led these countries to join the Community will cause them to strengthen and accelerate the efforts made hitherto to push beyond the organization of competition to direct Community policies.

As far as the Consultative Committee is concerned, we must continue to see that its independence and right of initiative remain intact, at least until such time as the three Communities and their treaties are finally merged.

And we should also do everything in our power in future to gain more publicity for the work of the Consultative Committee and the views of its members, so that its voice is heard not only by the Council and the Commission but in public also.

With the same objectives in mind we should also expand our ties with the European Parliament in order to adopt a joint position with it *vis-à-vis* the Council and the Commission on questions of European policy - the Parliament on behalf of the citizens of our countries, the Consultative Committee on behalf of coal and steel, i.e. of the industries as well as their employees and the body of consumers and dealers.

Many obstacles still have to be overcome before economic and monetary union becomes a reality. For a Community industrial policy there are still no instruments, since rudimentary provisions for these, although made in the Paris Treaty, are virtually absent from the Treaty of Rome.

A long road still lies ahead before the day on which the activities of our Community are crowned by the true political union of our countries.

And so, even on this day of remembrance, we must look to the future. Let us hope that our work will continue to be of value, and may it hasten the success of the European Community, for the good of all those living and working in our countries.