

'Mining Safety Conference in Luxembourg' from the Saarbrücker Zeitung (26 September 1956)

Caption: On 26 September 1956, the German daily newspaper Saarbrücker Zeitung reports on the debates taking place in Luxembourg at the European conference on mining safety, organised by the ECSC High Authority in response to the Marcinelle tragedy which resulted in the deaths of 262 pit workers in Belgium on 8 August 1956.

Source: Saarbrücker Zeitung. 26.09.1956. Saarbrücken. "Grubensicherheitskonferenz in Luxemburg".

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Mining Safety Conference in Luxembourg

The Mining Safety Conference, convened by the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community following the accident in Marcinelle, opened in Luxembourg on Monday. The governments of the six Member States of the ECSC as well as representatives of producers and workers are taking part in the Conference.

During the opening session, Léon Daum, Member of the High Authority, declared that the Conference would have to tackle individual problems but also address the more general issue of pit safety. Paul Finet, Member of the High Authority, pointed out in this connection that the Conference was limited by time. Its work was to be completed by 31 January 1957. 'Every day saved can save lives too,' Mr Finet stressed. Mr Finet reminded the meeting that the Council of Ministers had instructed the Conference to consider two main problems: a comparative analysis of safety regulations and a comparison of the structure, practical efficiency and organisation of the various services responsible for mine safety.

Mr Finet announced that, in preliminary talks with experts, the issues to be discussed during the Conference had been divided up into four categories:

1. firedamp and dust, explosives, blasting operations, fires at the pithead or underground;
2. electrification, mechanisation and the transportation of staff and materials in the mineshafts;
3. ventilation, dust accumulation, tunnelling and location of accidents;
4. structures in the various countries and the prevention of accidents.

The organisation of rescue procedures could, according to Mr Finet, be addressed at a meeting of those responsible for the rescue services in the various countries; this should take place as soon as possible.