

Letter from Paul Leroy-Beaulieu to Alain Poher (13 April 1951)

Caption: On 13 April 1951, Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, Director-General of Economic and Financial Affairs at the High Commission of the French Republic in Germany, writes a letter to Alain Poher, French representative at the International Authority for the Ruhr (IAR), to inform him of the strong opposition from the German unions to the dissolution of the Deutscher Kohlenverkauf (DKV), the sole selling agency for Ruhr coal.

Source: Archives historiques des Communautés européennes, Florence, Villa Il Poggiolo. Dépôts, DEP. Pierre Uri, PU. PU 38.

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Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs

13-4-51 DCEF No 06673

Dear Mr Poher,

I assume the International Authority for the Ruhr has, as is customary, received from the Allied General Secretariat of the High Commission copies of the letters exchanged with the Chancellor concerning the decartelisation of the coal and steel industries. For your convenience, I nevertheless enclose a further set of copies with this letter. You are also, I imagine, aware, as I made this point very clearly to Humbert, that these letters constitute the outcome of lengthy negotiations undertaken by the Americans at Mr Monnet's request.

It should be noted, as regards the dissolution of the DKV, that it was only by dint of considerable persistence that the Americans succeeded in persuading the Chancellor himself to propose that the organisation be wound up. As you are aware, Mr Adenauer had, in this connection, to overcome fierce opposition from trade unions and industrialists alike. And they have not yet given up. At a luncheon with union leaders last Friday, it became clear to me that their opposition to the winding-up of the DKV is as fierce as ever. The new Junior Minister for Economic Affairs, Mr Westrick, asked me the day before yesterday whether it might not be possible to have the winding-up postponed until the Schuman High Authority takes up its duties.

The unions had earlier approached Mr McCloy in much the same vein, and he had been extremely reserved in his response. He confined himself to saying that he would put the question to his colleagues. I gave them the same answer. You are, I am sure, aware of the importance which both the Department and Mr Monnet attach to the winding-up of the DKV, whose continued existence they regard, for reasons which are known to you, as being incompatible with the proper functioning of the High Authority.

I would add that, when the question came before the High Commission, the British High Commissioner bowed to the majority view and did not ask for the matter to be put to the vote. I find it surprising, therefore, that the British representative to the IAR should, as indicated in your telegram, have adopted a different stance.

I was concerned to forward this information to you so that you might report it, should you see fit.

Yours sincerely,

P. Leroy-Beaulieu