

Memorandum in favour of the establishment of the European Coal Organisation (3 May 1945)

Caption: On 3 May 1945, the United States and the United Kingdom inform the Governments of Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Greece, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, the Soviet Union, Turkey and Yugoslavia of their wish to see a European Coal Organisation established that will enable coal-exporting and coal-importing countries to meet and plan their supplies.

Source: European Coal Organisation 1945 to 1947, Brief description and history. London: European Coal Organisation, 1948. 91 p. p. 36-37.

Copyright: All rights of reproduction, public communication, adaptation, distribution or dissemination via Internet, internal network or any other means are strictly reserved in all countries.

The documents available on this Web site are the exclusive property of their authors or right holders.

Requests for authorisation are to be addressed to the authors or right holders concerned.

Further information may be obtained by referring to the legal notice and the terms and conditions of use regarding this site.

URL:

http://www.cvce.eu/obj/memorandum_in_favour_of_the_establishment_of_the_european_coal_organisation_3_may_1945-en-2f96aa07-fedf-4c3b-a1cb-1ccac2f8b55c.html

Publication date: 14/05/2013

Memorandum in favour of the establishment of the European Coal Organisation (3 May 1945)

(Enclosure to Foreign Office letter dated 3rd May, 1945, addressed to the Governments of Belgium, Czechoslovakia, France, Greece, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Turkey, the United States, the U.S.S.R. and Yugoslavia).

A. Nature of the Problem

(i) Need for Co-ordination of Coal Supplies for Europe.

The recent acceleration in the progress of the European war has underlined the urgency of the problem of co-ordinating coal supplies for Europe in the period immediately preceding and following the end of the German war. It is already clear that, owing to man-power and transport difficulties, supplies of coal from non-German sources will, for some time, fall far short of requirements, even if enemy resistance were to be overcome without extensive damage to Allied and enemy coalfields; and that in this transition period, Europe will have to depend to an appreciable extent on German coal. Later, when and if export surpluses become available in the Allied coal-producing countries, it is considered that, so long as the total requirements in Europe exceed total supplies, the only means of ensuring a fair and equitable distribution of total export supplies would be to co-ordinate the allocation of such supplies, together with Germany's surplus. The measure of the German surplus which may be made available by the Controlling Powers for use outside Germany will depend on reparation and other agreed policies.

(ii) Equipment of Mines.

Supplies of mining machinery and equipment will be required for the mines to reach their maximum production. Many of these requirements are in very short supply and will need expert co-ordination so as to ensure an equitable and efficient distribution of both indigenous and non-indigenous supplies. It may well be, for instance, that German mines should not have the first choice of machinery and equipment produced by German industry. An important factor in the distribution would be the extent to which output of coal could be increased by the provision of mining machinery and equipment made available for allocation on the lines proposed in the preceding paragraph, due regard being paid to local needs and to the transport available at the time.

(iii) Mining Labour.

The return of displaced miners, and the recruitment of new, presents a serious problem requiring co-ordination so that the needs of Europe as a whole may be determined and presented to the appropriate authority.

(iv) Transport.

As the possibility of moving supplies both by land and sea will be entirely dependent upon the availability of transport, it will be necessary to co-ordinate the demands for the transport of coal and mining machinery, so that these demands can be effectively presented to the authorities responsible for co-ordinating transport to meet requirements, e.g., the United Maritime Authority and the European Central Inland Transport Organisation.

(v) Protection of Allied Interests.

German supplies which may be made available by the Controlling Powers in accordance with paragraph (A) (i) for use outside Germany will need careful and expert handling if benefits are not to accrue to Germany to the detriment of Allied interests.

B. Existing Machinery

- (i) The Combined Boards at present only allocate available exportable supplies of coal and planned items of mining machinery emanating from the British Empire and the U.S.A.
- (ii) During the period of military operations, S.H.A.E.F. and A.F.H.Q. control the import of coal and mining machinery into North-West Europe and the Mediterranean Area.
- (iii) Neither of these arrangements would suffice to deal with the problems outlined above. In any case, the period during which the Allied Commanders-in-Chief will continue their present limited functions is short.

C. Proposed Machinery to Meet the Problem

- (i) It is proposed that an advisory body known as the European Coal Organisation should be set up for the effective co-ordination of European requirements and supplies in relation to the world shortage of coal supplies, mining labour and equipment, and transport. The European Coal Organisation, taking into account reparation policy and other agreed policies, would make recommendations to the appropriate national and international authorities or other bodies concerned, with the object of ensuring a fair and equitable allocation of supplies and in order to resolve emergency situations within Europe as they arise. The member Governments, for their part, would make suitable arrangements to enable their representatives on the European Coal Organisation to express their Government's views promptly on proposals designed to resolve these emergency problems, and to enable their national authorities to act promptly with respect to the recommendations of the European Coal Organisation.
- (ii) The member Governments would, upon request, provide the Organisation with such information as is essential for the performance of its functions.
- (iii) The Organisation would, it is hoped, be composed, in the first instance, of representatives of the Allied Governments of Europe and of the United States Government. There would, of course, be provision for the development of mutual understanding and the establishment of suitable relationships with the Allied Commanders-in-Chief, Allied Control Commissions or other appropriate authorities in enemy or ex-enemy countries, Combined Boards, U.N.R.R.A., E.C.I.T.O., U.M.A. and reparation or other bodies which may be established. Provision would also be made for appropriate relationships with the neutral Governments as necessary. Finally, the E.C.O. would consult, through the proper channels, with representatives of employers and employees on matters of mutual concern, and would also take into account the interests of consumers.

D. Functions of the European Coal Organisation in relation to German Coal and Mining Equipment

The distribution of German coal and mining equipment will be dependent on reparation policy, and the operations of the European Coal Organisation will be fully consonant therewith. The Controlling Powers will determine, in the light of agreed reparation policy, how much German coal and mining equipment will be allocated to reparation and how much will be required to meet their strategic needs, including the needs of the forces of occupation, and to ensure the execution of the policies of the Controlling Powers in relation to Germany. The determination of priorities between these policies lies outside the province of the European Coal Organisation though the Organisation may advise and assist in the execution of such policies. German coal and mining equipment that may be made available for use outside Germany, other than that transferred on reparation account, will be subject to the recommendations of the European Coal Organisation.