

Preface to the final ECSC Consultative Committee yearbook (2001–2002)

Caption: The preface to the 2001–2002 ECSC Consultative Committee yearbook summarises the latest achievements of the Committee under the Presidency of Enrico Gibellieri, whose mandate ends on 23 July 2002 with the expiry of the ECSC Treaty.

Source: Consultative Committee, Yearbook, 10 October 2001 - 23 July 2002, President Enrico Gibellieri. Luxembourg: European Coal and Steel Community - Secretariat of the Consultative Committee, 2001-2002.

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Preface to the final ECSC Consultative Committee's yearbook (2001-2002)

The Presidency of Enrico Gibellieri started on 10 October 2001 and ended on 23 July 2002, together with the expiry of the ECSC Treaty.

Enrico Gibellieri was therefore the last President of the ECSC Consultative Committee, the only ECSC institution existing in its original form. For this reason, the Consultative Committee had the historical role of representing the whole ECSC at the closing acts of the ECSC Treaty.

In fact, the last formal act of the Consultative Committee was the adoption of a Resolution on the legacy of the ECSC, which was published in the Official Journal on 24 July 2002.

The importance and relevance of this last Presidency was made very clear from its very beginning by the President. At the end of the Presidency, it can be said with legitimate pride that the Consultative Committee has definitely succeeded in achieving three essential goals.

Firstly, it was ensured that the research activities in the field of steel and coal could continue without interruption after 23 July, even in the case of non-entry into force of the Treaty of Nice. An inter-governmental decision was agreed by the Member States, according to which all research activities in the field of coal and steel will continue with no interruption under the management of the European Commission. In this respect, it should be underlined that appropriate action was taken in due time by the President on behalf of the Committee, with the Presidents of the Council of the E.U.

Secondly, the negotiations were finalised, and the creation within the Economic and Social Committee secured, of a "Consultative Subcommittee for Coal, Steel and Industrial Conversion", to be partially composed of former members of the ECSC Consultative Committee. Its structure and work programme were agreed with the Economic and Social Committee.

The ECSC Consultative Committee decided the criteria according to which the selection was to be made and, on the basis of proposals received from the relevant European associations, established the list of members and deputy members of its competence. The European Commission, duly briefed, proposed an amendment to the EU budget, which was subsequently accepted by both Council and Parliament, so that the costs of such a new structure can now be borne by the Economic and Social Committee. The first meeting of this Consultative Subcommittee should take place by November 2002 at the latest.

Thirdly, the celebrations for the expiry of the ECSC Treaty were at the same time dignified and institutionally and politically remarkable. They started on 26 March in Marcinelle with a tribute to the miners who died in the 1956 accident, as an occasion to honour all the workers of the steel and coal sectors who lost their lives and health at the workplace. The last, formal sitting of the Consultative Committee on 27 June was attended by H.R.H. Grand-Duke Henri of Luxembourg, and speeches were delivered by representatives of the major European institutions. The President of the Italian Republic, Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, honoured the ECSC Consultative Committee by granting an audience to its Bureau in Rome on 16 July. The celebrations ended in Brussels on 23 July, the day of expiry of the ECSC Treaty. The ECSC emblem was lowered by President Gibellieri, who then passed it on to President Prodi standing at his side.

After this, the flag of the European Union was raised: the ECSC no longer exists, it contributed ambitiously to peace and welfare, it enabled the existence of the European Union and it is the historical memory of Europe. It is the root on which the European ideal has grown and on which it will continue to grow in the future.