1996 ECSC operating budget

1995/2116(BUD) - 18/10/1995

After amendments, the Committee on Budgets adopted the report by Mr Jean-Antoine GIANSILY (UPE, F). The Committee noted that following the positive economic trends for 1995, ECSC activities for 1996 could be seen in a favourable context. According to forecasts, steel production would increase by 14 million tonnes in 1995, with a further increase of 2 million tonnes expected in 1996. However, coal production was expected to decline with output falling from 130 to 127 million tonnes. The Commission proposed an ECSC operating budget of ECU 241 m, that is to say 27% less than 1995, due primarily to the decrease in the rate of the levy (which was down from 0.21% to 0.19%) and to the reduction in the net balance for the financial year. In the amendments which it had adopted the Committee on Budgets proposed: - to increase readjustment aid: up by ECU 6 m (to give a total of ECU 86 m instead of the ECU 80 m proposed by the Commission) - to increase research aid: up ECU 14 m (to give a total of ECU 74 m instead of the ECU 60 m proposed by the Commission) These appropriations are to be distributed at the rate of an extra ECU 4 m for steel research and an extra ECU 10 m for coal research. - to reduce reconversion aid by ECU 20 m: ECU 30 m instead of the ECU 50 m proposed by the Commission. The Committee on Budgets also proposed revising the sums allocated to social measures associated with the restructuring programme: - ECU 2 m less for the steel sector, whose allocation now becomes ECU 18 m; - ECU 2 m more for the coal industry, whose allocation is now ECU 28 m. The Committee also suggested studying the possibility of the EU applying a global levy to all ECSC products in order to improve the competitive position of Community production and urged the Commission to see to it that stricter criteria be applied to the granting of reconversion aid. The Committee also called on the Commission to indicate, during the course of 1996, which of those activities provided for in the ECSC Treaty would continue beyond 200. Finally, the Committee on Budgets considered that the idea of setting up an endowment fund to inherit the assets of the ECSC Treaty, after the latter had expired, was an attractive proposition.