

**Loans at reduced interest rates for the financing of low-cost housing which might be granted by the Commission of the European Communities under Article 54 of the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community**

**Guidelines for the implementation of the ninth programme 'ECSC low-cost housing' applicable for the period 1979/1983**

The provisions of Article 54 of the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community permit the Commission of the European Communities to assist the financing of investment programmes, works and installations which contribute directly to the competitiveness of coal and steel producers. These provisions have permitted the Commission since 1954 to grant loans, normally long-term and at an interest rate of 1 %, for the construction and modernization of housing for the personnel of the ECSC industries, and for the construction of housing for renting as well as for the purchase of housing for owner-occupation.

The Commission has recently decided to embark on a ninth programme 'ECSC low-cost housing' covering the period 1979/1983.

These loans have the double objective of supporting the sectoral policies for coal and steel defined at Community level and improving the living conditions of workers subjected to particularly arduous working conditions, such as continuous shift work, underground working, working in the heat of blast furnaces. A good-quality house is, in fact, often a decisive factor in the workers' acceptance of the hardships of permanent restructuring of the two sectors, such as closure of collieries, opening of new seams and transfer of steel installations.

In view of the social circumstances of many migrant or other lower-paid workers with dependents and their working conditions, such as shiftwork, exposure to heat, noise and dust, the Commission, in assessing the contribution which a housing scheme makes to the attainment of sectoral objectives and to the improvement of living conditions of workers, will take account of the need for a measure of regional equilibrium and of all the circumstances and factors surrounding and characterizing the operation and in particular of the following aspects:

*A. Operations accompanying and promoting the attainment of Community sectoral objectives*

1. In the steel sector

- housing schemes which may facilitate restructuring or redevelopment by encouraging workers to accept transfer to competitive units of production, whether new installations, or installations already in full production;
- housing schemes connected with competitive units of production needing to retain and recruit the necessary skilled workforce.

2. In the coal sector

- housing schemes which may contribute to the continuation or extension of existing mine-workings;
- housing schemes which may contribute to the launching of mining operations on new sites.

*B. Action to improve the living conditions of workers*

1. From the social point of view

- housing schemes benefiting the most socially underprivileged workers in particular the migrant workers;
- housing schemes benefiting workers having the most arduous working conditions.

2. From the technical point of view

- schemes involving the insulation of housing against noise;
- schemes involving heating insulation of housing;
- housing schemes involving any other arrangements designed to save energy.

3. From the environmental point of view

- schemes involving the improvement of the immediate surroundings of housing;
- schemes involving the rehabilitation of housing in the context of urban renewal.

The Commission will grant loans in close consultation with the joint regional committees representative of both sides of the ECSC industries.

The abovementioned criteria will apply directly to the first instalment of the ninth programme 'ECSC low-cost housing' covering the period 1979/1981. If necessary, these criteria could be subject to subsequent amendments which the Commission might

wish to make in the light of the results of a study, which is under consideration, on the housing situation and the relative burden of housing costs for the personnel of the ECSC industries in the different Member States.

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