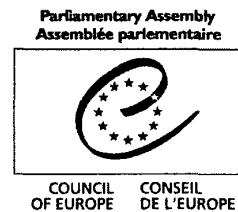


## Parliamentary Assembly Assemblée parlementaire



For debate in the Standing Committee — see Rule 15 of the Rules of Procedure

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### The future and regeneration of coalfields in Europe

Report  
Committee on Culture, Science and Education  
Rapporteur: Mr Jean-Pierre Kucheida, France, Socialist Group

#### *Summary*

The report describes the rapid decline of coalmining, which once provided the staple food of European industry, and the difficulties for the regeneration of the regions affected.

*In addition to social and economic factors, it identifies elements of the cultural traditions and values associated with coalmining communities.*

Member States and the European Union, which succeeded the European Coal and Steel Community, are asked to work together on a number of measures to preserve the tangible and intangible aspects of the coalmining heritage as well as to assist in regeneration and environmental programmes.

**A. Draft resolution**

1. The Parliamentary Assembly is aware that the coalmining industry has played an essential part in the economic and social development of Europe. Without coalmining, Europe would never have played its part in the world. Coal was the "staple food of industry" in the nineteenth century and in most of the twentieth century.
2. Today, at a time when mining work is being reorganised everywhere in Europe, the regeneration of entire regions is causing a great many problems and the traces of this glorious past are disappearing one after another.
3. The Assembly notes with concern that in some countries a mining heritage of great historical value is likely to be lost, in particular through lack of sufficient resources for its upkeep and development.
4. More generally, the conservation of the industrial heritage involves essential issues which were emphasised in Recommendation No. R (90) 20 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the protection and conservation of the technical, industrial and civil engineering heritage in Europe. The Council of Europe's Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society also stresses the challenges of safeguarding this heritage.
5. Therefore the Assembly invites Member States and the European Union which succeeded the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) to work together on:
  - 5.1. co-operation in protecting the mining heritage, whether tangible or intangible, stressing collaboration between the authorities and competent non-governmental bodies and individuals and associations from the worlds of industry and tourism and the community;
  - 5.2. the creation of a European Body to draw up an inventory of mining sites, to preserve them and to develop them, in particular for cultural purposes and endowing it with the necessary resources;
  - 5.3. the introduction, in parallel to a new world mining and industrial disaster centre, of a World Day for the victims of accidents at work and occupational diseases;
6. The Assembly also asks member States to:
  - 6.1. promote improvements to transport, cultural, tourist and training infrastructures in the coalfields in order to provide a sound foundation for their regeneration;
  - 6.2. encourage environmental improvement policies in order to transform the image of mining regions and re-use the former mining sites for other purposes;
  - 6.3. promote co-operation by SMEs/SMIs with the various parties involved in order to develop an enterprise culture and offset the negative effects of the monoculture inherited from the mining "mono-industry";
  - 6.4. encourage the training of men and women from these regions by fostering continued training; this is a priority in coalfields, calling for a close partnership between local authorities and States;
  - 6.5. examine the social structures inherited from mining and which, in certain respects can be cited as exemplary.

## **B. Explanatory memorandum by Mr Kucheida**

1. Mining regeneration in Europe has increased in tempo over the last thirty years. Since the 1990s the effect of this process on the countries of Western Europe has been the same. The first blow was the loss of jobs. In France, Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom 530000 jobs, i.e. 82% of the jobs linked to the coal industry, were lost between 1980 and 2000. These enormous losses had very serious effects on local economies.
2. Moreover these regions, with their run-down environment, do not attract investors. Their infrastructures are often weak. Furthermore, the resident population frequently has insufficient training and little appetite for retraining, which does not make business creation easy.
3. Local authorities are faced with a very uncertain social situation because of unemployment and poverty. Coal-mining regions are often dependent on one industry alone, so that the whole economy is based almost entirely on only one employer.
4. The restructuring of mining, or its termination, has long-term effects. The regeneration of a typical coalfield takes a generation at least, if not more, depending on its particular features.
5. The first part of this report will give an overall picture of the situation in the principal European mining countries (Germany, Spain, France, Poland, the United Kingdom, Russia and the Czech Republic) in geographical and social terms. The second part will describe the regeneration of coalfields from a cultural viewpoint. The third part will focus on the cultural and comprehensive nature of the coalfield regeneration process.
6. This report is based in particular on the work derived from a programme of exchange of experience in the regeneration of coalfields in Europe<sup>1</sup>.

### **1. The general situation in Coalfields in Europe: obvious common features**

#### *i. Germany: mining in decline in densely populated areas<sup>2</sup>*

7. The German coalfields are mainly in densely populated areas. Over time, however, the mining industry in the Ruhr has tended to follow the coal reserves, and is advancing northwards into less densely populated areas.
8. For reasons of statistical accuracy (see Table 1 at Annex), the data referred to below refer solely to the Ruhr region, which accounts for about 70% of German coal mined in 2003.
9. At the socio-economic level, in 2002 the male population was 2585278, with the female population at 2747106. The rate of unemployment in the Ruhr region in 2002 was 12.2%, i.e. above the national average of 10.5%. In December 2004 unemployment in the Ruhr region was 12.8% (as against a national average of 11.9%).
10. Local authorities in the Ruhr region have many problems. Since the German coal industry is uncompetitive, more and more collieries have closed in recent years. Only seven collieries and three coke ovens are still in current operation in the Ruhr region. Given the international instability of markets in the steel sector, reductions in the number of collieries and coke ovens are still in the offing.
11. Given the fact that coal and steel have dominated production in the Ruhr region for decades, diversification of the economy is much less than in other regions in Germany. From another aspect, jobs previously gained by the coal and steel industry cannot quickly be made good by other

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<sup>1</sup> The RECORE (Regenerating Europe's Coalfield Regions) programme brings together eight partners representing coalfields in EUROPE (Germany, Spain, France, Poland, the Czech Republic, the United Kingdom, Russia and Ukraine). Other countries such as Belgium, Romania or Hungary also take part. This programme is run as part of Interreg III.

<sup>2</sup> Only the Ruhr coalfield is dealt with in this part.

industries. Job creation in various future technologies is a considerable challenge. At the same time, long-term support should be given to the jobs that are at the bottom of the skill ladder. Aid from the European Union and from the regional government of North Rhine-Westphalia have already enabled cities and towns in the Ruhr to develop substantially.

12. However, they still need additional support from public bodies, since several of the problems encountered call for long-term solutions. Several of these sites have been converted to museums or are at the conversion phase, or used for other cultural projects.

*ii. Spain: enclosed coalfields and a demographic decline*

13. The location of mines in Spanish territory derives from the characteristics of mining (essentially underground), originally in mountainous regions difficult to reach.

14. Activity was so intense in Spain that it gave rise to rapid demographic expansion; what was initially a rural area was transformed into an urban area. This in itself is a problem in the context of the present regeneration process, precisely because of the geographical characteristics of these coalfields: steep-sided valleys, mountainous areas, isolated areas, etc.

15. At the socio-economic level, shutdowns were accompanied by a steady reduction in the number of inhabitants. The birth-rate is very low, and the aging of the population is inexorable. The flight to the town is inevitable so long as there are no real alternatives that would make it possible to keep the people in these regions.

16. This crisis has numerous consequences. The mining regions have one of the highest rates of unemployment in the country, a GDP per head below the national average, and lag behind in terms of the infrastructure network.

*iii. France: a wide variety of situations*

17. Mining took off at the end of the nineteenth century. After the nationalisation of the mining companies in 1946, activity reached its high point in 1960. The decline set in as from 1962. Operations ceased on 23 April 2004 (see Table 2 at Annex).

18. In total 2700 pits were sunk, 4.5 billion tonnes were mined and 726 tips were built. In 1947 358241 people were employed in mining.

19. From a geographical viewpoint, French mines are grouped together in three regions:

- The Nord-Pas-de-Calais coalfield was the largest (50% of production). Its distinguishing feature is its privileged position. This is one of the busiest transit points in north-west Europe.
- Lorraine is the second largest coalfield (25% of production). It also enjoys a privileged position along the German border (Sarre).
- The Centre Midi coalfield comprises a group of fields smaller in size. Except for Gardanne-Marseille they are often in thinly populated and sometimes enclosed regions.

20. In terms of demography, shutdowns have involved substantial losses of population. These losses have been relatively less in Nord-Pas-de-Calais and Lorraine, which are still heavily populated (1.5 million). The variations are much greater in the Centre Midi coalfields (losses reaching 70% of the population), with general ageing.

21. In terms of the economy, the primary objective of the authorities was to promote industrial diversification, but also to encourage tertiary businesses to settle. This policy, which has been remarkably successful, has made it possible to offset direct losses of mining jobs but not spin-off job losses. Unemployment rates are still above national and regional averages, particularly in Nord-Pas-de-Calais, with peaks of over 20% in some towns and cities.

22. Apart from issues connected with employment, the priority concerns of the authorities in mining regions relate to the transformation of their territory: recovery of the urban fabric and restoration of the environment.

23. The social situation also reveals serious shortcomings (particularly in health and level of education), which the local authorities' policies are attempting to correct, without being taken into account nationally in this country, which is still highly centralised.

*iv. Poland: substantial unemployment and demographic problems*

25. In Poland, 68 communes in four mining provinces have the status of mining commune (see mining statistics, Table 3 at Annex):

- Silesia (55 communes);
- Malopolskie 6 communes (1 mine);
- Lublin 3 communes (1 mine);
- Lower Silesia 4 communes (no active mines).

26. Most of the work is in Silesia, where over 91% of all Poland's coal is mined. The area of the province of Silesia is 12000 km<sup>2</sup> (forests: 31.7% of surface area), its population is 4.9 million and its demographic density is 398 persons/km<sup>2</sup> (Poland 123 km<sup>2</sup>).

27. The economy of the province of Silesia rests on over 323000 companies employing a total of over 3 million. The region has 13.02% of all economic units in Poland and 21.25% of all employees. Unemployment in Silesia is 18.1% (April 2004) and the natural increase is negative.

28. The province of Silesia is the second in Poland in terms of foreign investment (over 300 investments exceeding \$1 million).

29. Thanks to these investments, the province is transforming itself into a modern technology development region, abandoning its former image little by little. Apart from its key position in the industrial sector, the region has a very well developed tourist base. Work for the recovery of the urban infrastructure is based on renewal of the typically "mining" construction of the poor family houses called "familoki".

30. Substantial resources are allocated for coordinated programmes to change the vocational qualifications of ex-miners (Mining Employment Agency). Nevertheless, a glaring new problem is making its appearance, due to the lack of new staff for mining operations (caused by the closure of most of the schools of mining and technical colleges). The museums of mining are generating ever greater interest; the mining tradition is still alive. The feast of Saint Barbe on 4 December is still traditionally celebrated throughout Silesia.

*v. The United Kingdom: a mining industry in the process of closure*

31. The mining of coal in the British Isles dates back to medieval times; however, the greatest expansion in the industry took place during the second half of the nineteenth century. Coal production in the United Kingdom reached its highest level during the First World War – about 300 million tonnes per year.

32. The Table below refers only to underground mines. Open-cast mining developed throughout the last thirty years. Current annual production is about 13 million tonnes from 45 sites with a workforce of about 2000. (*The decline of the United Kingdom coal industry is shown in Table 4 appended*).

33. Work relating to coal mining takes place in various geographic settings – in the suburbs of some towns, in the vicinity of smaller towns and in country villages. Mining has very often been dominant in regions where there was little or no alternative employment. Geographical isolation was a common feature of the industry and regions depended on coal mining for employment.

34. The local authorities of the Coalfield Communities Campaign (CCC) represent about 5 million people in the United Kingdom. Since its creation in 1985 the main aim of the CCC has been the socio-economic and environmental reconstruction of the mining communities.

35. The CCC has conducted a campaign in support of a great variety of policies intended to tackle problems connected with unemployment, geographical isolation, poor infrastructure, health, neglect, environmental damage, educational underperformance and the general lack of sources of finance.

vi. *Russia, powerful mining regions*

36. Russia ranks fifth in world coal production, after China, the United States, India and Australia. Five per cent of world coal is mined in Russia, although it ranks eighth in the classification of coal-exporting countries. In 2003 coal production reached 272 million tonnes; 20% of all coal produced in Russia was exported. In 2002 exports of coal products reached 50 million tonnes in total. Coal imported into Russia (20 million tonnes in 2002) generally comes from Kazakhstan.

37. Coal reserves in Russia are about 200 billion tonnes, or 11.3% of world reserves. In the coal industry sector there are 240 mining businesses, 110 pits and 129 open-cast mines with a total annual capacity of 281 million tonnes of coal, and 40 specialised factories handling about 120 million tonnes of coal products per year. The total number of persons employed within the framework of the coal industry is 300000.

38. Following the restructuring of the sector, a high proportion of the businesses have been converted to limited companies and privatised. At present the amount of coal produced by the private companies is 85%.

39. In Russia coal is consumed in all 89 regions of the Federation and is produced in 24 of them. The regional structure of coal mining is changing. The percentage of competitive production of forge coal is increasing, and the relatively unprofitable share of production in the Urals region, the Eastern Donets Basin and the Moscow region is decreasing.

40. The process of privatisation of coal-producing businesses in regional and federal areas will be completed between 2003 and 2005. During the same period the process of selling off pits prescribed by the restructuring programme will be finished.

vii. *The Czech Republic: an environment in danger*

41. The town of Ostrava-Karvina is in the north-east Czech Republic, bordering on Poland and Slovakia.

42. Coal has been mined in Upper Silesia for 200 years. This mining activity in the Ostrava-Karvina region has changed the natural balance substantially. At the level of the coalfield, 14200 hectares are affected by subsidence due to deep mining. Subsidence from 2 to 5 m can be seen over a territory of about 7000 hectares, and land affected by mining subsidence in excess of 5 m accounts for about 2000 hectares. Another classification make a distinction between ruined soil (2600 hectares) and seriously damaged soil (5000 hectares). The area taken up by mining activities is 2200 hectares.

43. On the other hand, the local authorities encounter many difficulties. These are a few examples:

- regional development of transport infrastructure and servicing by public transport;
- environmental problems (air and water quality, waste disposal, rehabilitation of mining wasteland);
- development of tourism and spas, services and products for tourists.

44. As solutions to these problems the local authorities propose to rehabilitate the sites of old unused mines and to guarantee investments for buildings and land to prepare them for fresh activities and to return some areas to cultivation.

## 2. Cultural enhancement of the mining heritage

45. In his report entitled "Chances and resources for the new development of a former coalfield"<sup>3</sup>, Marcel CABBIDU, a former French MP, stated that "cultural activities have an "opening-up effect" on these territories through the reception arrangements that are made which are a key factor in their appeal, and a "rebalancing effect" through the exploitation of specific inheritances and legacies. Cultural initiatives enhance the identity of a territory and give it a positive high-class image. They mobilise the energies of those who live there.

46. By encouraging those involved to find their identity again and to speculate about their future they produce a forward-looking culture that may be reflected in everyone's behaviour. They are a source of improvement in the living environment, and culture may be the basis of activities, income and new jobs.

47. In fact culture is an economic sector in the full sense, a creator of direct or indirect jobs, particularly in trade, tourism and related services.

48. It is a source both of new activities and of new and positive behaviour patterns that will foster and develop these activities. On this dual basis they open up new positive prospects of identity and diversity for the territories. It thus facilitates a break with the existing cultural organisation and opens up new horizons. For instance, the construction of major cultural amenities such as Louvre II in Lens (France) provides impetus for acquiring an enlarged cultural identity. An analogy could in fact be drawn with the Guggenheim museum in Bilbao (Spain).

49. Culture is a vehicle of identity for the population, a cement (*cf.* the blossoming of community life) and a factor in the appeal of a town or a region. As such it may be a powerful criterion for the establishment of businesses.

50. The part played by the mining heritage in the development of leisure activities and tourism in mining regions is vital, because it is no longer regarded as something useless but, on the contrary, as a new cultural asset. So it is a value-added resource for the cultural as well as the socio-economic development of mining regions.

51. The cultural dimension of coalfields may have various aspects:

### *i. A tangible heritage with major development potential*

52. This heritage is very important, both because of its size and through the symbols that it represents. It includes:

- mine shafts and underground galleries;
- pitheads with machine rooms, shoring, wash houses, stores, lamp rooms and other installations. This architectural and technical heritage is highly representative of the industrial architecture of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries;
- transport infrastructure (railway lines, roads and canals).

53. This heritage is under serious threat because the sites to be preserved are often very large and fragmented, have to be cleaned up, have no successors in title (sometimes for a long time), are flooded, etc. For these reasons many sites have just been destroyed. It is true that the diversity of this heritage makes overall protection difficult, but with the disappearance of these sites a culture and

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<sup>3</sup> "Les chances et les moyens du nouveau développement d'un ancien bassin minier", Marcel CABIDDU, a former French MP, La documentation française, Paris, 2001.

a memory are lost for ever. Minimum conservation, failing entire conservation, of these assets is absolutely essential to the ability to interpret a landscape that has developed over several centuries; they provide evidence of the development of techniques and architecture.

54. However, there are ways of enhancing the value of these items of evidence: The first way is to preserve sites by creating museums which show, *inter alia*, the wide variety of technical and social aspects of mining culture. We find a great many such museum sites throughout Europe, varying considerably in size. Most of them attract large numbers of visitors, particularly schoolchildren, at the regional level. However, increasing numbers of persons keen to learn about the whole saga of the coalmining industry are now also seeking out these museums. Outstanding examples are the mining history centre at Lewarde – Nord-Pas-de-Calais (France), the miner's museum at Landek (Czech Republic), the Blaenafon site (Wales), San Martín del Rey Aurelio – Asturias (Spain), the underground mine museum at Wieliczka (Poland), the Wakefield Museum (England) and the Bochum mine museum – Ruhr (Germany).

55. More symbolically, some items of shoring have been conserved as civil engineering structures clearly symbolising mining history. Moreover, these structures are of exceptional architectural quality, which means that they constitute landmarks in the urban landscape. However, mine shoring structures are more often than not destroyed when the mines are shut down. In France, for example, parts of the shoring used at Liévin and Roost Warendin have been preserved as urban monuments.

56. While some former coalmines have been turned into museums, others have been preserved and converted into cultural or tertiary amenities (exhibition grounds, cinemas, theatres, association HQs, etc). We might mention the following examples: the Zollverein site – Essen (Germany), the Winterslag site – Genk (Belgium) and Loos en Gohelle, Oignies – Nord-Pas-de-Calais (France).

57. Unesco has recognised the historical and cultural interest of many of these sites. The Zollverein (Essen, Germany), Blaenafon (Wales) and Wieliczka (Poland) sites have all been added to the World Heritage list. The Nord-Pas-de-Calais coalfield has also applied for world heritage status, and its application is currently under examination.

ii. *An environmental and landscape heritage*

58. Mining has had an enormous ground-level impact on the areas in which it is carried out. The mine closures left enormous tracts of industrial wasteland which often present desolate landscapes (dilapidated buildings, polluted land, refuse storage, settling basins, tips, opencast mining, etc). Mines have also had an effect on the subsoil: subsidence caused by underground workings have damaged buildings and disrupted surface water runoff or affected water quality. The impact of mining on the environment has been a factor in the negative image attaching to the regions in question.

59. Consequently, one of the main challenges to be taken up by mining regions is to transform their landscapes. The legacy of the mining era offers real potential here, and if it is put to good use it could make a major contribution to rehabilitating the territories in question.

60. Mine tips<sup>4</sup> have a genuine value as monuments. Some of them which are conical and several dozen metres high have been described as "industrial pyramids".

61. The tips also constitute unique biotopes, providing remarkable conditions for original fauna and flora. In fact some local associations take advantage of these special features, organising educational visits to the sites.

62. Tips are also of immense importance as open-air recreational areas: creation of hiking routes and parks, but also, more specifically, ski slopes (Noeux-les-Mines – France). Nor should we forget that tips can be used as training grounds for athletes (jogging, mountain bikes, paragliding,

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<sup>4</sup> <sup>4</sup> Tips are dumps containing earth (the "spoil") brought up with the coal in mining



orienteering, etc). For example, the city of Liévin will be hosting an international cyclo-cross event on one of its local mine tips in 2006.

63. Some opencast mines have also been extensively redeveloped, eg in Cap'Découverte (Tarn – France).

64. Alongside the tips, many man-made lakes (the result of mining or artificial subsidence) also form part developed as leisure and water sport facilities, but they also have an environmental dimension because they are staging posts.

65. Heavy goods transport infrastructures (railways and canals) were particularly highly developed on coalfields for the transporting coal. When mines shut down these infrastructures fall into disuse. In some regions they have been developed as "green corridors" and public parks for walks and other leisure activities. The "Coal Trail" in the Ruhr region (Germany) and waterway tourism in the United Kingdom are just two examples of such conversions.

*iii. A highly specific urban legacy*

66. Mine housing and its organisation is another symbol of this industry. In order to house and settle (because labour is hard to find) the great influxes of workmen and their families, the mining companies were to design a new type of housing: the mining estate. So many forms of housing (no less than 800 different types of dwelling have been counted in the Nord-Pas de Calais coalfield in France) will be built and succeed each other over the centuries: from the mining village to residential suburbs, from garden cities to blocks of flats. In the Nord-Pas de Calais coalfield alone there are no less than 70 000 dwellings that exist in a highly specific urban fabric (quadrangular or concentric layout, in any case always organised).

67. A further feature of the mining urban fabric was that the various neighbourhoods were built up around the pitheads. These neighbourhoods were virtually self-sufficient, cut off from the rest of the town. They were highly original because the mining companies built not only the miners' houses but also the public amenities: schools, health centres and co-operative stores. The mining companies also contracted out the construction of sports and cultural amenities.

68. This unique mode of organisation is one of the originalities of the urban fabric in coalfields. It has helped forge people's attitudes and fostered an original type of culture. It also reflects the paternalism of the mining companies.

69. Most of this heritage has now been sold to former miners or social housing agencies. The approach adopted in Nord-Pas-de-Calais (France) was innovative in this respect because the heritage was sold to a public institution run by the local authorities (*Epinorpa*).

70. Today, one of the challenges facing urban renewal policies is to preserve the memory of this mode of urban organisation, which bears unique witness to the mining era.

*iv. An intangible and social heritage*

• *Community life*

71. One particular aspect of the coalfields and of miners' social identity is a spirit of solidarity, mutual aid and self-denial. This aspect can no doubt be explained by the demands of the miner's trade. The miner's social identity explains the vitality of the voluntary sector in coalfields. Furthermore, this sector plays a major role in the coalfields in terms of both the number of voluntary associations at work and the support given to community life and local democracy.

72. The voluntary sector conducts some very specific activities. For instance, music societies (brass and wind bands, accordion clubs) abound in mining areas. In fact, the British filmmaker Mark Herman immortalised the miners' brass band in "Brassed Off", which won a César award.

73. The pigeon fanciers' club is another traditional type of association for miners.

74. Moreover, St Barbara's Day is enthusiastically commemorated throughout the European coalfields, St Barbara being the patron saint of miners. The annual festivities include various religious processions.

75. Lastly, mining calls for a large workforce. This requirement led to intensive immigration. For instance, many Turks were employed in mines in Germany and Belgian Limburg. The Nord-Pas-de-Calais coalfield in France took in immigrants of some 29 different nationalities (from all over eastern and southern Europe and the Maghreb). The coalfields experienced extensive intermingling of populations, which led to great cultural diversity.

76. For example the Nord-Pas-de-Calais coalfield in France was marked in particular by the arrival and expansion of the Polish community. Many generations later, this community has managed to preserve its cultural and religious customs.

77. Sport, especially football, which was encouraged by the mining companies, is also still one of the characteristics of the coalfields (Racing Club de Lens (France), Charleroi (Belgium), Liège (Belgium), Schalke - Gelsenkirchen (Germany), Donetsk (Ukraine), etc).

- *A tradition of trade unionism*

78. Nor should it be forgotten that many famous political and trade union leaders (Jean Jaurès in France, Arthur Scargill in Great Britain, and others) came from the coalfields, which have been a melting pot for politics. Every coalfield has locally famous trade union figures (eg Arthur Lamendin and Emile Basly in Nord-Pas-de-Calais, France). This tradition is celebrated in Jean Michel CARRE's film *Charbons Ardents* (Burning Coals) and Emile Zola's *Germinal*, which was adapted for the screen by Claude BERRI. In France, it was by dint of uncompromising strikes and trade union and political struggles that the working day was very quickly cut from 12 hours or more to 9 and then to 8 hours, and the weekly rest day, pensions, retirement and the prohibition on women going down the pit would be established. It is especially in the coalfields that trade unionism developed. Miners in some countries in Europe (Romania, Ukraine) still have an important political role today.

- *Mining, an exceptional and dangerous job*

79. Lastly, there is one more point in favour of preserving these testimonies to mining – the memory of the thousands of miners who died in the course of their work, sometimes in very distressing circumstances: the Courrières disaster in France in 1906 (nearly 1 100 deaths), Senghennydd (Wales) in 1913 (440 deaths), Liévin in 1974 (42 victims), 43 deaths at La Ribolla (Rocca Strada) in Italy in 1954, 262 deaths in Marcinelle near Charleroi in 1956, the very large number of fatal accidents every year in Russia and Ukraine and the 20000 or so miners who die every year in China, and so on.

80. Also, there are many cases of occupational disease and accidents at work in mining: oedema, amputations, deafness, etc. and above all silicosis, that insidious disease that day after day condemns the miner to die of asphyxia. In Nord-Pas-de-Calais (France) alone there are still 12000 victims of silicosis per 100000 people entitled to the miners' health scheme.

81. Is not this self-denial, this continual risk taken in the service of the public, part of this unremitting effort in a most arduous job full of risks, like going to sea? Why, then, are these, like all those who do a difficult job, not entitled, like those who died for their country in war, to a day of recognition and a commemorative centre?

82. The arduous nature of work in the mine has tightened the ties among people living in the mining community villages. This spirit, which is still very strong today, in spite of the death of the coal industry, should be preserved, and why should it not serve as a model or a benchmark?

v. *The rediscovery of another, forgotten past, buried under the coal*

83. Mining has shaped the natural and urban landscape, leaving an indelible mark and a very substantial heritage. However, there is another very substantial heritage that exists at the same time, the historical heritage prior to mining. It also is in some way the soul of these mining towns. It is essential, therefore, for these communities also to be able to take back their non-mining past, because often the only memory they have retained is that of their mining past.

84. The town of Liévin (France) provides a good illustration of this approach. This community of nearly 35000 today was no more than a big village with 1457 inhabitants in 1857, when the first coal seams were discovered. Liévin was razed to the ground during the First World War and its landscape has been completely transformed in 150 years of coal-mining. At the end of the 1990s the town council decided to set up a Municipal Memorial Office to rediscover the community's past through a structured approach organised round major topics. This was necessary because the town had to be given a soul after an economic development phase, an industrial development phase and a redevelopment that gave the town physical unity. For this purpose the community had to take back its non-mining past; it has a very rich past. Its site was already occupied in the Neolithic period. Recent excavations organised by the Municipal Memorial Office revealed Gallo-Roman remains. In addition, the largest Frankish necropolis in the Pas de Calais (752 tombs) was unearthed there early in the twentieth century and proves that Liévin was an important Merovingian town.

85. As in the town of Liévin, the cultural development of mining regions can also be achieved in this way in various forms, where this is possible, by including developing and safeguarding the historical heritage from the period prior to mining when dealing with the mining heritage. The rediscovery of this past is also of value for teaching purposes, because showing that one has had a past other than mining is to show in the end that one can also have another future.

*vi. Recommendations for enhancing the mining heritage*

86. The mining heritage consists of both tangible (buildings and infrastructures) and intangible (social) elements. Any action we can take to improve its recognition will facilitate the regeneration of the coalfield and/or a whole region.

87. The benefits of enhancing the heritage go far beyond mere preservation. Heritage enhancement will make it possible to diversify activities and create new jobs. From this angle, the trend towards cultural and leisure activities and tourism is a lever, or indeed a new mainspring, of development.

88. It is therefore high time we saved all surviving heritage items, no longer destroying the (small or large) relics of mining, and so to safeguard the remembrance of it. However, what is needed above all is a new European network of former mining sites, to work in co-operation with the local authorities. Such co-operation might be based on the experience gained by European Action for Mining Communities (EURACOM).

89. Networking of the various kinds of experience existing at the European level would facilitate study of the technical and financial procedures for enhancing the mining heritage.

90. Moreover, in order to secure optimum results, it is vital to promote European co-operation in protecting the mining heritage, whether tangible or intangible, stressing co-operation among the public authorities, the relevant non-governmental organisations and representatives of industry, tourism and the community at large.

91. However, we must also, and above all, deploy the requisite resources for setting up a European Organisation responsible for the recording and preservation of mining sites and their development, particularly for cultural purposes.

92. Lastly, a World Day for the victims of accidents at work and occupational diseases could be introduced in parallel with a new world mining and industrial disaster centre. This could be one of the driving forces for developing a culture of remembrance for the mine and its miners.

### 3. Coalfield regeneration: a comprehensive process

93. Cultural enhancement of the coalfields and preservation of their identity are decisive factors for regenerating such regions. However, socio-economic regeneration of coalfields also corresponds to a comprehensive process with sustainable development goals. In this context, efforts to reinforce the cultural identity of coalfields fits into the wider picture of regional development policies, drawing on infrastructure development, environment enhancement, promotion of foreign investment and SMEs/SMIs, and training for women and men.

#### *i. Infrastructure improvement: a support for coalfield development*

- The stakes in infrastructure development

94. The development of most of the mining regions in Europe has been based on a distinctive history, in which the priority for the transport infrastructure was the carriage of coal and other heavy goods for heavy industry. As regards many of these regions, the transport network is no longer suitable and substantial investment has been required to modernise it. In some regions, like the United Kingdom, it was necessary to link the regional road and rail network to the national and international network. In the case of other regions, like Russia and Ukraine, the problems of the transport networks are aggravated by the geographical extent of the territory and the poor quality of the national and international networks. In a region such as the Asturias in Spain one of the key issues was the mountainous nature of the region. The priority was therefore to open up the mountains and the coastal area.

95. Infrastructure modernisation is therefore the basis for economic and social regeneration; there could be no economic, social or cultural development without restructuring the essential physical characteristics of the regions.

96. It is also apparent that although local authorities have a key role in infrastructure improvement, the cost is very high. Such investment requires the support of national governments, as well as the European Union. Without this support, local authorities could not finance such major projects.

#### *ii. Improving the environment: towards a culture of sustainable development*

97. Mining has significant effects upon the environment and upsets ecological balances. These effects can be seen in working coalfields, but also in those where operations have ceased. Besides, in the case of working coalfields the working methods give no scope for reducing pollution, mainly because of economic considerations.

98. Mining affects the subsoil as much as the surface: subsidence or collapses, pollution of underground water, disruption of surface water systems, industrial wastelands, soil pollution, escapes of firedamp, settling tanks, etc.

99. Damage to the countryside should also be mentioned. The impact of mining on the environment also has a psychological impact on the people.

100. The redesignation of the environment is essential in the case of mining regions. This involves promoting sustainable development in territories where makeshift development methods are being used because the coal seams are worked out or will be in the more or less short term.

#### *iii. Encouraging foreign investment in the coalfields: the end of an industrial monoculture*

101. The issues in foreign investment are both obvious and constant, whatever the mining region. However, two cases should be distinguished:

- for sectors where the mining industry is still active, foreign investment helps to diversify the economic fabric and so to anticipate the adverse socio-economic effects of mine closures;

- for sectors where the mine is in the process of closure or has finally shut down, foreign investment helps in the social and economic conversion of the regions affected.

102. Contrary to received wisdom, many mining regions attract foreign investment.

103. Mining regions are often presented as relatively unattractive. Indeed mining often does damage the landscape; moreover, mine closures involve social difficulties that are often acute. But this negative image can be qualified. In fact the reports submitted have shown that foreign investors preferred to develop projects in the major European centres, but that there were also many projects in the coalfields. These investors come from European Countries as well as from outside (Asia or the United States). The capacity of mining regions to receive foreign investors is one of the **major lessons** of this seminar. It has become apparent that this development from outside brings two main factors into play:

- the territorial factor (geographical position, transport infrastructures, land reserves to accommodate new activities, the existence of a local development strategy, etc);
- the human factor (close links with universities and training bodies and tailored reception of investors).

iv. *The promotion of small and medium-sized businesses and industries in the coalfields and the development of an "enterprise culture"*

- A quantitative and qualitative deficit

104. Over and above the differences that exist between countries, the reports submitted have revealed the special situation of the coalfields with respect to SMEs and SMIs. Statistics show that there is a shortage of small and medium-sized businesses in mining regions. For example, the rate of creation of SMEs/SMIs in the coalfields is far below the average.

105. Two main reasons for this have been advanced. The first is cultural and social. The spirit of initiative is less well developed in the coalfields. Freedom of enterprise is not a quality that was encouraged by the mining socio-economic system. The second is the way in which the mining industry developed. It actually developed on the mono-industry model, thus limiting the development of any other business.

- SMEs, the keystone in economic diversification

106. Thus the benefits of creating SMEs/SMIs in mining regions have been unanimously stressed by all delegations. Whatever the geographical location of the regions concerned, East or West, the socio-economic situation of present or former coalfields is precarious. Strengthening the SME/SMI fabric is the keystone in the economic diversification of these regions. It is an essential factor in ensuring their sustainable development. It is also apparent that the development of SMEs/SMIs is a recurrent and continuing issue. Whatever the stage of mining restructuring may be (mines already shut down or being restructured), this continues to be a burning question.

vi. *The training of men and women: an essential factor*

107. The problems connected with training in the coalfields are directly dependent upon their socio-economic situation and progress in mining industry restructuring.

108. Two scenarios must be distinguished:

- Countries in which coal is still produced such as Russia, Ukraine and Poland, even Germany and the Czech Republic

109. In this scenario the aim of vocational training is to adapt working miners to developments in technology or to assist their promotion. It can also be used to train new miners. In the context of mining industry restructuring, the purpose of further education is to promote the retraining of former miners. These retraining policies are on a large scale (thousands of jobs are often involved).

- Countries where coal production has ended or nearly ended, such as France, the United Kingdom or Spain

110. In this scenario, further education meets the socio-economic needs of the labour market area concerned, not only those of former miners. Social difficulties, often acute, are a feature of former coalfields. Unemployment rates are high and the standard of education is below average, which leads to a shortage of skilled manpower. In this context those principally affected by the offer of training are young people and women.

111. Training policies conducted in the coalfields may have various aims. Bringing up to standard, adaptation to new trades or techniques, supporting local economic development and the principle of lifelong education are nevertheless permanent features.

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**APPENDIX**Table 1. Development of mining in Germany

	1960	1990	2004
Production (Mt)	142.3	70.2	25.7
Number of miners	490200	130300	42000

Table 2. Production and mining workforce in France

	1960	1990	2004
Production (10 <sup>6</sup> t)	57.03	12.25	0
Workforce	216031	22494	2810

Table 3. Mining statistics for Poland

	1960	1990	2003
Employment (coal)	323500	399300	146000
Production (coal)	104.4 Mt	147 Mt	102.0 Mt

Table 4. Changes in the number of mines, the number of miners and coal production in the United Kingdom

	1960	1990	2004
Production (Mt)	186.8	72.3	16.4
Employment	588500	57300	6000

(The United Kingdom produces coal only)

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*Members of the Committee:* Mr Jacques **Legendre** (Chairman), Baroness Hooper, Mr Josef **Jařab**, Mr Wolfgang **Wodarg**, (Vice-Chairpersons), Mr Hans **Ager**, Mr Toomas Alatalu, Mr Emerenzio Barbieri, Mr Rony **Bargetze**, Mr Radu-Mircea Berceanu, Mrs Marie-Louise Bemelmans-Videc, Mr Radu-Mircea Berceanu, Mr Levan **Berdzenishvili**, Mr Italo Bocchino, Mr Bořidar Bojović, Mr Ioannis **Bougas**, Mrs Anne Bresseur, Mr Osman Cořkunođlu, Mr Vlad Cubreacov, Mrs Maria **Damanaki**, Mr Joseph Debono Grech, Mr Stepan **Demirchyan**, Mr Ferdinand **Devinski**, Mr Detlef **Dzembitzki**, Mrs Kaarina **Dromberg**, Mrs Åse Gunhild Woie Duesund, Mrs Anke Eymer, Mr Relu Fenechiu, Mrs Blanca Fernández-Capel (Alternate : Mrs Soledad **Becerril**), Mrs Maria Emelina Fernández-Soriano, Mr Axel Fischer, Mr José Freire **Antunes**, Mrs Siv Friedleifsdóttir, Mr Ian Gibson (Alternate : Mr Robert **Walter**), Mr Eamon Gilmore (Alternate : Mr Paschal **Mooney**), Mr Stefan Glăvan, Mr Luc Goutry, Mr Vladimir Grachev (Alternate : Mr Igor **Chernyshenko**), Mr Andreas Gross, Mrs Azra Hadžiahmetović, Mr Jean-Pol Henry, Mr Rafael **Huseynov**, Mr Raffaele Iannuzzi, Mrs Halide **İncekara**, Mr Lachezar Ivanov, Mr Igor Ivanovski, Mr József Kozma, Jean-Pierre **Kucheida**, Mr Guy Lengagne, Mrs Jagoda Majska-Martinčević, Mr Tomasz Markowski, Mr Bernard Marquet (Alternate : Mr Christophe **Spiliotis-Saquet**) Mr Andrew **McIntosh**, Mr Ivan Melnikov, Mrs Maria Manuela de **Melo**, Mr Paskal Milo, Mrs Fausta Morganti, Mrs Christine Muttonen, Mrs Miroslava **Němcová**, Mr Jakob-Axel Nielsen, Mr Edward **O'Hara**, Mr Andrey Pantev, Mrs Ganira Pashayeva, Mrs Antigoni Pericleous Papadopoulos, Mrs Majda Potrata, Mr Lluís Maria de Puig, Mr Anatoliy Rakhansky, Mr Johannes Randegger, Mr Zbigniew **Rau**, Mr Zoltán Rockenbauer, Mrs Anta Rugāte, Mr Piero Ruzzante, Mr Volodymyr Rybak, Mr Pär-Axel Sahlberg, Mr André **Schneider**, Mr Vitaliy Shybko, Mr Yury Solonin, Mr Ninoslav Stojadinović, Mr Valeriy Sudarenkov, Mr Mehmet **Tekeliođlu**, Mr Ed van **Thijn**, Mr Piotr Wach, Mrs Majléne **Westerlund Panke**, Mr Emanuelis **Zingeris**, NN Andore

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