

European Commission Starts In-Depth Investigation into BHP Billiton's
Proposed Acquisition of Rio Tinto

July 7, 2008
The Japan Iron and Steel Federation

On Friday, July 4, 2008, the European Commission announced the opening of an in-depth investigation into the proposed acquisition of Rio Tinto by BHP Billiton.

According to the European Commission, its preliminary investigation found that the acquisition could lead to increases in prices of iron ore, coal and other products as well as reduction in the choice of suppliers for customers of these companies, and thus may be incompatible with the Single Market of the EU.

The European Commission will complete its in-depth investigation within 90 working days, that is, on or before November 11. However, this deadline can be extended by, for example, mutual agreement between BHP Billiton and the European Commission.

We have consistently stated its opposition to this proposed acquisition ever since BHP Billiton announced in November 2007 its intention to acquire Rio Tinto. To prevent this acquisition from taking place, we will continue to cooperate fully with investigations by the European Commission and by the antitrust authorities of other major countries associated with the proposed acquisition.