

research and technology

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- ** The Commission of the European Communities recently decided to set up a working party to draw up an ACTION PROGRAMME COVERING THE ENVIRONMENT and to create the necessary administrative machinery within its organization. A short note on the Community's approach to environmental problems is attached.
- ** The European Parliament's Committee on Energy, Research and Atomic Problems recently adopted a report by Mr Oele, a Dutch member of the European Parliament, on the reorganization and future tasks of the JOINT RESEARCH CENTRE and the proposals put forward by the Commission of the European Communities for a CONCENTRATED COMMUNITY SCHEME OF ACTION ON RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT, both scientific and technological (see "Research and Technology" No. 75).

Regarding the Joint Research Centre, the Committee found that the adoption, over the last three years, of research programmes covering only one year resulted in a regrettable lack of continuity in the work and under-utilization of the Centre's facilities. It considers that the Joint Research Centre could make an outstanding contribution in the environmental sphere, and, in the field of industrial development,

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The information and articles published in this Bulletin concern European scientific cooperation. Hence they are not simply confined to reports on the decisions or views of the Commission of the European Communities, but cover the whole field of questions discussed in circles concerned in European cooperation in science and technology.

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should add to technical knowledge, particularly with regard to advanced reactors (in view of the threats to the Community's energy supplies).

Lastly, the Committee on Energy, Research and Atomic Problems gave its agreement to the setting-up, as proposed by the Commission of the European Communities, of a European Committee on Research and Development and expressed the hope that it "will be able to promote the implementation of the cooperative projects recommended by the Aigrain Committee, which are currently subject to delay due to the unavoidable sluggishness of intergovernmental discussions".

** The Commission of the European Communities recently decided to amalgamate all its administrative units dealing with INDUSTRIAL AFFAIRS, TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH into a single Directorate-General. Together with the Directorate-General for the Joint Research Centre, responsibility for the new Directorate-General for Industry and Scientific Research will be in the hands of Mr Spinelli, Member of the Commission.

** After a break of about seven months, the Council of Ministers of the European Communities adopted on 1 March the ninth directive on the REMOVAL OF TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE IN THE AUTOMOBILE SECTOR. The directive in question relates to REAR-VIEW MIRRORS, in respect of which it lays down requirements as to design (notably, the dimensions of the reflecting surface, impact resistance and the flexibility of the mounting) and installation (number, position, adjustment, field of view, etc.). A Community approval mark will be placed on rear-view mirrors to attest their compliance with the manufacturing standards.

The new requirement in accordance with which manufacturers have to fit and deliver new vehicles with both an outside and an inside rear-view mirror makes an effective contribution to safer driving,

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It joins the components or characteristics (exhaust system, noise level, air pollution, fuel tanks, rearward protective devices, registration plates, steering gear, doors and audible warning devices) already brought under Community regulation by eight earlier directives. A further step has thus been taken towards Community acceptance standards for the whole vehicle.

- ** A group of experts from the Community countries met at the Battelle Institute, Frankfurt, on 19 February in order to review the work carried out there, in conjunction with the Bergbau-Forschung (mining Research Institute), Essen, under a Commission-funded research programme on DUST ABATEMENT IN MINES, particularly the technical advances which will shortly make possible the continuous measurement and monitoring of the emission of dust harmful to miners.

- ** Between 18 March and 18 May 1971 a British organization, the Federal Trust for Education and Research, is to hold a series of working seminars to be attended by BRITONS INTERESTED IN THE COMMUNITY'S INDUSTRIAL POLICY.

- ** About 40 European and American specialists are to attend a symposium on problems relating to RADIATION SENSITIVITY and damage due to radiation which will be held at the Joint Research Centre's Ispra Establishment next April.

- ** The Commission of the European Communities recently sent to the Council a proposal for a directive regarding the APPROXIMATION OF THE MEMBER STATES' LEGISLATION relating to certain METHODS USED IN THE QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS of binary blended TEXTILE FIBRES. The proposed directive dovetails with the first directive on the approximation of legislation in the textile sector, which the Commission sent to the Council on 14 March 1969, and aims to ensure that the use of different methods of analysis in different Member States does not lead to disputes liable to impede free trade in textiles within the Community.

** SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL REPORTS recently published by the Commission of the European Communities include the following:

- Etude neutronique du plutonium dans les réacteurs à neutrons thermiques (Rapport final) (Neutron studies on plutonium in thermal reactors - Final report)

(No. EUR 4477 f - 234 pages - 300 FB - available in French)

- Kernenergieforschungsschiff "Otto Hahn" - Jahresbericht 1968 (Nuclear research ship "Otto Hahn" - Annual report 1968)

(No. EUR 4487 d - 68 pages - 100 FB - available in German)

- Second information meeting on prestressed concrete reactor pressure vessels and their thermal isolation

(No. EUR 4531 d/f/i/n/e - 1114 pages - 1,400 FB - available in Dutch, French, German, Italian and English)

- Application of Atomic Energy in Agriculture - Annual Report 1969

(No. EUR 4545 e - 86 pages - 125 FB - available in English)

- Centrale elettronucleare del Garigliano - relazione annuale 1969 (Garigliano nuclear power plant - Annual Report 1969)

(No. EUR 4580 i - 80 pages - 125 FB - available in Italian)

These reports can be obtained from the Sales Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 37 rue Glesener, Luxembourg.

** Experts from the Community countries met at Paffendorf, Germany, on 4 March 1971, to review the results of a Commission-funded research project aimed at improving methods of BRIQUETTING LIGNITE.

Commission of the European Communities to Prepare
a Programme of Action to Protect the Environment

It has been estimated that an average American city with a million inhabitants has a daily consumption of 625,000 tons of water, 2,000 tons of food and 9,500 tons of various fuels. In fact, only a very small proportion of these is actually consumed: they are used, converted and discharged, producing 500,000 tons of waste water, polluted to a greater or lesser degree, (and containing 120 tons of solids), 2,000 tons of solid waste and 950 tons of atmospheric pollutants.

This points up the fact that urban sprawl is a predominant factor in causing environmental damage, together with the faster rate of population increase and heedless technological progress.

With help from society's indifference to the problem, these three factors contribute, together and in isolation, to the continuing generation of fresh needs for space, food, water, air, fuel and minerals, and exert constant pressure on natural resources.

- The population is rising at such a rate that in 40 years the world will have twice as many inhabitants as at present, whereas it has taken mankind half a million years to reach his present numbers. Moreover, it is not so much the increase in population that jeopardizes the present and future availability of resources once considered inexhaustible, such as water and air, and each individual's increasing demands for energy and resources. Individual water

requirements alone seem to double every 40 years; in view of the increase in the population over the same period global, demand for water will quadruple, while ever-increasing amounts of water will be rendered unusable by pollution.

- Heedless technological progress is another cause of ecological damage. By creating new needs and, at the same time, the means of satisfying them, technological progress helps indirectly to promote the other factors contributing towards pollution. Among its peculiar features, pollution due to technological progress numbers unpredictability and persistence: how often has it proved impossible to foretell the effects of pollution before they became disquietingly, and sometimes irreversibly, plain? This is exemplified by the use, and on occasions, the misuse, of DDT, traces of which can now be found in soil, water and in living creatures - even the body fat of penguins in the Antarctic. Along with other pesticides, DDT has been responsible for practically breaking the reproductive cycle of certain species of fish in inland waters. Its concentration and effects in the sea are still unknown.

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This explains why environmental problems and the protection of the biosphere have given rise in all industrialized countries, notably the Community Member States, to concern, studies and numerous and various decisions which reflect society's gradual awareness of the seriousness and complexity of these problems.

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This awakening has already led some countries to organize and intensify the fight against environmental damage. In the USA the Environmental Protection Agency has the task of coordinating the work of existing bodies, France recently set up a Ministry for the Protection of nature and the Environment and a major anti-pollution programme has been elaborated in Germany.

More is needed than just a compromise between a policy of economic growth and attempts to improve the environment: a new attitude is called for which would mean considering the qualitative rather than the quantitative aspects of technological progress, using economic growth as a means of improving the quality of life - particularly by making ecological factors an integral part of the economic planning and decision-making process, accepting the necessary financial sacrifices and altering existing institutions so as to enable them successfully to tackle problems which do not fit into the traditional political and economic framework.

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Clearly, the damage due to pollution and the effect of the measures taken to combat it cut across national frontiers. In many cases nuisances are no respecters of territorial boundaries and joint action by the countries affected is needed in order to eliminate them. Anti-pollution measures may also have major repercussions on national economies and international trade. They involve the countries which take such steps in heavy spending, both by the public authorities and by the private sector (research and development, capital expenditure, etc.), which may place certain branches of these countries'

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economy and industry at a disadvantage in relation to their competitors who are less concerned about the evils of pollution. They may create barriers to trade or have serious economic consequences for other countries.

Consequently, the Commission of the European Communities would have no excuse for failing to examine these problems carefully and to assume political responsibility for them in the common interest. The President of the Commission mentioned this in his speech to the European Parliament on 10 February (see "Research and Technology" No. 86).

With this in view the Commission recently decided to set up a working party, briefed to prepare an action programme for the environment, and to create the necessary administrative machinery within its organization.