

# EUROPEAN SUMMIT

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

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BACKGROUND NOTE

## FIRST EC ENVIRONMENT POLICY ADOPTED

The European Community and its Member States want to work with other countries in combating pollution. This was one of the goals agreed by the EC Council of Ministers when it adopted the Community's first environment policy in Brussels on July 19. (The European "Summit" in Paris, October 1972, called on EC institutions to draw up an environment program by July 31 this year.)

Prepared by the Commission, the two year program calls for Community action, and for measures by Member States, acting individually. The Council will coordinate the latter with the Community program.

For joint action, the Council agreed to act within nine months of its receiving specific proposals from the Commission.

### Objectives

A Community environment policy will seek "to improve the setting and quality of life, and the surroundings and living conditions of the Community population," according to the program.

In particular, the Community intends to:

- prevent, reduce and, where possible, eliminate pollution
- maintain a satisfactory ecological balance and ensure protection of the biosphere
- exploit resources without appreciably damaging ecological balance
- improve working and living conditions
- take greater account of environmental aspects in planning services and regional policy
- cooperate with nonmember states and international organizations.

### Principles

In principle the EC environment policy should:

- prevent pollution and "nuisances", rather than try to counteract their effects
- improve scientific knowledge about fighting pollution and enhance environmental research through a long-term European policy in this field
- let polluters themselves pay for antipollution measures
- avoid harming developing countries' interests

- heighten public awareness of the importance of environmental protection
- promote local, regional, national, Community and worldwide action, according to the pollution problem and the area concerned.

### Actions

The Community environment program includes three types of action: reduction and prevention of pollution; improvement of the environment; Community action or joint action by Member States in appropriate international bodies.

In countering pollution the Community will seek to:

- assess the risks of pollution for the environment and to health
- establish common antipollution standards for the most dangerous pollutants, in order to protect water and air (from noise and dirt)
- encourage Member States' monitoring and testing bodies to exchange information
- introduce measures to curb pollution caused by certain highly polluting industries such as paper and pulp and iron/steel
- take part in all international activities of common interest to the Member States, such as the fight against marine pollution and the protection of the Rhine Basin.

The EC's environment policy will also try to improve the quality of life through social, agricultural, regional, and transportation policies.

Ministers agreed that the Community should focus on:

- conservation of surroundings, especially by maintaining agriculture in certain regions
- improved working conditions
- urban and regional planning, especially transportation problems.

The Community will cooperate with non-member countries within the framework of international organizations such as the United Nations and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. International cooperation is held to be necessary as many environmental problems cannot be tackled by the Community alone.

Urgent specific proposals that the Commission is drawing up cover quieter motor vehicles, limits of lead in gasoline and of sulfur in domestic heating oils.

The Community will take part in an international conference to be held in Paris in September 1973, on reducing the pollution from the shore in the North Sea and the North Atlantic. It will also participate in a conference in Bonn in October 1973, organized by the International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine from Pollution. At the conference countries bordering the Rhine hope to agree on steps to reduce chemical and thermal pollution of the river -- one of the world's most polluted waterways.