

REPRODUCTION AUTHORIZED

Brussels, 24 February 1970

No. 44

** The Commission of the European Communities recently submitted to the Consultative Committee of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) a report on the FUTURE ORIENTATION OF TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC RESEARCH ACTIVITIES IN THE STEEL AND COAL SECTORS. A brief analysis is given as an ANNEX.

** The six Consultative Committees on the management of nuclear programmes (which the Community decided to create last June for the following sectors: fast reactors, high-temperature reactors, heavy water reactors, high-flux reactors, plutonium and transplutonic elements and condensed state physics) met during the first two weeks of February either in Brussels or in the establishments of the Joint Research Centre. These Committees are composed of representatives of the Community Member States and of the Commission. They will give an opinion on the ORIENTATION OF THE COMMUNITY'S RESEARCH PROGRAMMES and will be responsible for the necessary LIAISON between the Community programmes and the corresponding national programmes in the six sectors under consideration.

** THE POWER OF THE HIGH-FLUX REACTOR AT THE PETTEN RESEARCH CENTRE in the Netherlands was raised from 30 to 40 MW on 20 February 1970, thus enabling the irradiations performed in this test reactor to be improved.

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- ** The authorizations for the MARKETING OF IRRADIATED FOODSTUFFS which have already been granted in certain countries were given after proof had been supplied of the absence of any unacceptable physical, chemical and cellular changes in them. This is the gist of the reply which the Commission of the European Communities recently gave to Mr Vredeling, a Dutch member of the European Parliament, who asked whether the irradiation of foodstuffs for preservation purposes would entail health dangers inherent in the irradiation process itself.
- ** ELEVEN IRON AND STEEL RESEARCH PROJECTS submitted to the Commission of the European Communities by companies or institutions in the Community which are seeking Community financial backing are being scrutinized by the appropriate departments of the Commission. They cover the following fields:
- the continuous refinement of steel in an electric furnace;
 - the automation of oxygen steelworks;
 - wide-strip hot rolling mills;
 - the in-use characteristics of steels;
 - the contribution of nuclear energy to the iron and steel industry.
- ** The RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH WORK EFFECTED UNDER EURATOM CONTRACT ON THE NUCLEAR REACTOR at Trino Vercellese, Italy, were discussed at a meeting which was recently held in Brussels and was attended by electricity producers and industrialists concerned with pressurized light water reactors. The Italian companies of Fiat, responsible for the theoretical studies, and ENEL, which was in charge of the experimental side, have submitted the results of their work. In particular, the meeting was used for comparing the theoretical and experimental data on the reactor core physics during the first fuel cycle. A post-irradiatory study of certain fuels discharged at the end of this first cycle is under way in the laboratories of the Ispra Establishment of the Joint Research Centre.

** The Joint Research Centre (JRC) is not directly concerned in the activities of the Data-Processing Committee of the International Union of Geological Sciences, an organization which embraces practically all the countries of the world. At the same time, since the secretary of the Committee is at present an official of the Ispra Establishment of the JRC, the Committee has proposed that its meeting be held at Ispra, on account of the international character of this establishment and in order to enable the members of the Committee to become acquainted with the TECHNICAL POSSIBILITIES OF A MAJOR DATA-PROCESSING CENTRE. This is the gist of the reply which the Commission of the European Communities gave to the written question put to it on this subject by Mr Vredeling, a Dutch member of the European Parliament.

** A conference on RADIATION AND ISOTOPE TECHNIQUES IN THE BUILDING INDUSTRY is to be held in Brussels on 28 and 29 October next by the Commission of the European Communities. It will be attended by about 200 participants from the Community and other countries. It is intended in the first place for users, industrialists and those research workers who are engaged in the application or testing of radiation in the building industry.

The Future Orientation of Technical and Economic
Research Activities in the Steel and Coal Sectors

Research in the steel and coal sectors must henceforward not only take into account factors relating to the Treaty of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), but must also fit into the wider context of European research policy. This requirement was already implicit in a document submitted by the Commission of the European Communities to the Council of Ministers in July 1968. Since then the work of the Scientific and Technical Research Policy (Aigrain) Group and the definition of six priority fields for cooperation between the Community and non-member countries (see "Research and Technology" No. 21) have revealed the existence of a close correlation between the projects proposed by the Aigrain Group and those undertaken by the ECSC.

The Commission has therefore submitted to the Consultative Committee of the ECSC an oral communication on the future orientation of technical and economic research as laid down in the ECSC Treaty (Article 55), which stipulates that the executive of the Community must "encourage technical and economic research concerning the production and the development of consumption of coal and steel, as well as workers' safety in these industries".

The Community's objectives in these sectors will have to give priority to the specific interests of sector-by-sector research in the fields of coal, steel and social affairs. They will also have to be integrated into the Community's medium-term economic policy, social policy and regional policy. In view of the specific requirements of the coal and steel industries, these objectives will be determined in the case of steel along the lines mapped out in a document entitled "Steel 1975-80" at present in preparation, and as regards the coal industry by the Community's long-term energy prospects.

In addition, of course, the research objectives in the steel and coal sectors will have to be based on a systematic examination of the national medium-term research programmes drawn up by the Community industries and institutions in these fields. Knowledge of these

programmes will enable the Commission to fix medium-term programmes which will dovetail with the overall European research policy and to pick out projects which deserve to be encouraged from the Community standpoint.

Lastly, the passage from the research to the innovation stage will have to be favoured by all appropriate means. In the same way access to new technical knowledge will have to be facilitated, in order to meet not only sectoral requirements, but also the general economic needs of the Community.