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A multiannual Research Programme in the Field of scientific and technical Training

Since 1958, when the European Atomic Energy Community was established, young scientists and technicians in the Community have been able to benefit from grants and allowances under a special scheme for the promotion of training and research. Originally designed to further the training and educational development of specialists in the field of nuclear technology, this programme has been broadened in recent years to take in researchers in other scientific disciplines; it is given a new lease of life in the Community's latest multiannual research programme for the period 1977-80.

During the years from 1963 to 1976, over 3.000 young researchers and scientists were assisted with monthly contributions varying between 220 and 660 u.c. Since it is not within the Community's terms of reference to set up and maintain training establishments of its own for the new generation of scientists, thus entering into competition with the traditional technical colleges and universities in the Community countries, special emphasis has been laid on the exchange of students, scientists and engineers between educational establishments in one Member State and research centres belonging to other Member States or to the Community itself. This approach helped to bring about mobility of scientific personnel within the Community at all levels of training and to establish links transcending national boundaries. No less important was its role in helping to build up a creative exchange of information, promote friendly relations between scientific colleagues, and keep the Community's research centres in close contact with university research.

Whereas the first training programme (1958-62) was primarily aimed at giving students from the science faculties of universities or technical colleges in the Community the opportunity to carry out practical research at a nuclear research centre in another member country, the second five-year programme (1963-67) was designed to enable university graduates to prepare a doctoral thesis at a foreign research centre or to benefit from interdisciplinary training.

During the following five years, from 1968-72, there were only one-year Community programmes which allowed nothing more ambitious than to mark time with existing activities, and for the most part consideration could only be

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given to work with fairly short time requirements. It was not until the four-year programme of 1973-76 that support could again be given to research requiring a longer period. This last programme, which ended on 31 December 1976, was the first in which candidates from the new member countries - Denmark, the United Kingdom and Ireland - were drawn into the scheme in larger numbers, thus strengthening the bonds between the training establishments in those countries and in the original Member States.

Thus the first steps were taken towards forging a scientific community in Europe by:

- promoting the exchange of young scientists and engineers between educational establishments and research centres in the Community countries at all levels of training;
- giving greater freedom of movement to trainee scientists and engineers as well as to teaching staff;
- stimulating interdisciplinary training, and
- furthering the exchange of scientists and engineers between research institutes and industrial suppliers.

New programme 1977-80

On 14 January 1974, the Council of Ministers of the European Communities decided to entrust the Commission with the task of coordinating national research policies and defining projects of interest to the Community in the field of science and technology. This opened up an important new horizon for Community research. Alongside the disciplines that have been prompted in the past, the new training programme is to be extended to areas of research in which the Council has adopted, or may adopt, programmes and projects. This will have two advantages: the exchange of scientists and engineers will strengthen the links between national and Community programmes, and the Community research centres will receive a powerful scientific stimulus from outside, thus enabling them to fulfil their original function as the focal points of Community scientific and technical know-how.

The specific measures by which the objectives of this programme are to be achieved are the following:

- the award of grants for the preparation at the JRC Establishments of degree theses to be presented at universities in the students' own countries;
- the award of grants for post-graduate studies at research centres and institutes in Community countries with which the Commission has contractual links in connection with indirect-action projects, or, if the purpose is to prepare a doctorate thesis, at the JRC Establishments;
- the award of post-doctorate grants for the purpose of acquiring a better knowledge of Community research programmes, particularly in interdisciplinary fields;
- the financing of advanced further education courses in areas of special relevance to the Community's research and development policy. (Special

mention should be made of the courses which are being started in 1977 in the form of a "summer high school" at the JRC in Ispra, Italy. JRC staff and visiting lecturers from different countries will be giving instruction on the latest scientific knowledge in six disciplines corresponding to sectors of the Community programmes).

In accordance with the principle of mobility, grant-aided scientific research must be carried out at a research institute outside the grantee's own country, but degree and doctorate theses have to be presented in the country of origin. To enable regular contact to be maintained with the professors supervising degree and doctoral theses, additional assistance is given to cover travel expenses. The persons eligible for this scheme are either students from the science faculties of universities or graduates and doctors in science and engineering from the member countries of the Community. In view of the strong international ties in science and research, the new programme also allows the admission of a certain number of young scientists and engineers from non-member countries with which the Community maintains contact in the field of science and technology.

The Commission considers that a training programme of this kind can add considerably to the existing JRC research potential, and make a useful contribution to the step-by-step implementation of a forward-looking research and development policy in the Community.