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Community to Relax Procedures for
Defining and Managing the Joint Research Centre Programmes

The reorganization of the Joint Research Centre, recently decided upon by the Commission, and the declared intention of the Community's Council of Ministers that in future it will draw up the Community research programmes in very general terms only, will open the way to resolute, methodical Community action to get a technological research and development policy off the ground. So said Mr Spinelli, member of the Commission of the European Communities with special responsibility for industrial matters and research, addressing the Council meeting of Ministers for Science of the six Community countries held in Brussels on 16-17 December 1970.

During that meeting the Community decided on the long-awaited reorganization of its Joint Research Centre; this will give a wide measure of independence to the Centre's Director-General, who will be assisted by a Consultative Committee composed of eighteen members (each member country will appoint three of these - one from its Civil Service, one with a scientific background and the third from economic and industrial circles). This modernizing of the procedures will entail changes in the

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financial regulations, and the Commission will put forward proposals on this subject. At the same time, when a new multiannual research programme has been adopted, the Staff Regulations will be revised in consultation with the personnel, naturally with due regard to acquired rights, and in a manner that will make for greater mobility.

Stressing the excellent atmosphere in which this set of decisions had been adopted, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers remarked that they had now laid a foundation on which the Joint Research Council could develop its new role and move out of the period of stagnation it has endured for the last few years.

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As to the nature of the new multiannual Community research programme (it is common knowledge that, for 1971, the Joint Research Centre is working on an annual programme basis) the Council asked the Commission to see, in the context of its work and of the studies it has launched to determine what non-nuclear projects could suitably be carried out at the Joint Centre, whether it would be expedient to set up a Community Standards Office (see "Research & Technology" No. 15).

In addition:

- (a) five delegations agreed in principle to the study envisaged by the Commission, which would assemble the information on which to base a decision as to the expediency of building the SORA pulsed reactor (see "Research & Technology" No. 74);
- (b) the Council agreed to pursue its work on the Commission's proposals regarding thermonuclear fusion and biology ("Research & Technology" No. 57).

More generally speaking, the new - and comprehensive - approach to scientific and technical research problems in the Community, proposed by the Commission ("Research & Technology" No. 75), was the subject of a thorough discussion at the end of which the Ministers instructed

their experts to study this proposal in further detail with the Commission, all agreeing that it would be a good thing to bring together the different circles in which the European scientific policy is being discussed today.

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As regards the 1971 research budget the Council, having studied the resolution adopted by the European Parliament ("Research & Technology" No. 78), confirmed the figures decided upon in October 1969 ("Research & Technology" No. 71).

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Lastly, the Council instructed an ad hoc Working Party of the Consultative Committee on Nuclear Research (the Committee, chaired by the Commission of the European Communities, is composed of experts appointed by the Member States) to assess the various existing processes with a view to the setting up of a European uranium enrichment facility, in accordance with the Commission's proposal ("Research & Technology" No. 18).
