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Commission's proposals for measures to implement The Hague
Conference's resolutions on the Community's
technological development

At their conference at The Hague on 1 and 2 December 1969 the heads of state and prime ministers reaffirmed their determination to intensify the Community's technological activity and to coordinate and promote industrial research and development in the leading growth sectors, in particular by means of Community programmes, and to make the necessary funds available for this purpose.

In order to translate this determination into action, the Commission has submitted first proposals to the Council with the aim of embodying the discussions on urgent problems, which have hitherto taken place at many different levels, in an overall framework and thereby giving them a fresh impetus. The Commission hopes that such a comprehensive discussion process may result in a clearer articulation of the political determination expressed at The Hague, and that it may facilitate solutions by weighing the various interests against one another.

In order to take a first decisive step towards a progressive introduction of a Community-scale harmonization, the Commission initially proposes the introduction of a periodic consultation procedure, at Community level, on the Member States' more significant projects in the field of research and development.

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333



Government-financed major technological projects for the construction of large-scale research instruments should be notified in advance to the Council by the Member States, so as to determine whether cooperation would be useful.

Even before the introduction of such a procedure, the Commission has made an additional series of proposals concerning the most urgent problems - proposals which are to be pressed further during a discussion in the Council. They relate to the following sectors:

Nuclear energy: The Commission proposes the promotion, where fast reactors and high temperature reactors are concerned, of joint projects undertaken by the leading European electricity producers, with a view to the construction of large prototype power plants with capacities ranging from 600 MWe upwards. This could be done under the provisions of the Euratom Treaty concerning the establishment of joint enterprises.

As regards the construction of a European uranium enrichment capability, the Commission urges the need, in view of the continuing uncertainty as to the technical processes to be used and of the extent of the expenditure involved, for a full exchange of technical and economic information between the Community countries, in order to be able to make the technological choice which is most advantageous to the Community.

Data processing: The Commission proposes that the Council should make absolutely clear its interest in the project worked out by the Aigrain group for a European large-scale computer unit, so as to induce the firms concerned to make the necessary pilot studies. The Commission further proposes a wide-ranging software programme (joint demonstration projects, financial backing for firms developing software, coordination on data banks).

Space: The Commission advocates permanent consultation between the Six in the Council on the problems of a revision of the European space programmes and on Europe's participation in the US post-Apollo programme.

Environmental problems: The Commission considers it essential to set up a medium-term programme of action, which would cover both the harmonization of regulations for the protection of the environment, which is necessary for reasons of competition, and the requisite research and development programmes. This programme would be drawn

up after consultation with all groups concerned. The Joint Research Centre would be assigned a role in the implementation of the research programme.

Scientific and technical information and documentation: The progressive establishment of a European documentation and information network in this field and the coordination of national policies are the subject of the report by a working group which will shortly be submitted to the Council of Ministers, and which the Commission recommends should be examined without delay.

Training and mobility of scientific personnel: One of the proposals submitted by the Commission is that the revised national plans for post-secondary education should be compared and coordinated. The responsible ministers should discuss these questions in the Council at an early date. Further proposals concern the recognition of diplomas, post-university education, and measures relating to the mobility of scientific personnel.