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** THE MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF DIPLOMAS is the subject of a reply recently given by the Commission of the European Communities to a written question put to it by Mr Hougardy, Belgian member of the European Parliament. The text of this reply is given as an ANNEX.

** THE MINISTERS FOR RESEARCH of the six Community countries will meet at Brussels on 23 JULY in order to ASSESS THE WORK OF THE AIGRAIN GROUP and the discussions by experts of the Fifteen which have been going on for several months (see in particular No. 55 of "Research and Technology") with the aim of instituting EUROPEAN SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COOPERATION between the Community, the countries applying for membership (United Kingdom, Denmark, Ireland and Norway) and Austria, Spain, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland.

These expert discussions, which have been conducted in seven sectorial committees (see "Research and Technology" No. 46) have led to conclusions on which the ministers of the 15 countries concerned will have to take a decision, no doubt in September. A second phase in the work should now make it possible:

1. To have forward studies conducted by specialized international organizations with the aim of defining

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the future needs of Europe as regards telecommunications and passenger transport between large conurbations.

2. To carry out market and technical feasibility studies as preliminaries to the working-out of intergovernmental agreements in the sectors where such studies are still necessary.
3. To prepare, in respect of all the other cooperation projects which are already more advanced, texts of intergovernmental agreements which could be ready for signature within four to 12 months and thus rapidly lead to concrete projects in the field of European scientific cooperation.

** During the last ten years, the Community's aid to COAL RESEARCH has accounted for 10-15% of the total coal research in the Community. The Commission of the European Communities has just approved a medium-term programme of aid for the next five years. A short note on this subject will be found IN ANNEX 2.

** The Commission of the European Communities has recently authorized the signature of a series of contracts under its BIOLOGY AND HEALTH PROTECTION programme. These contracts represent a total of 2.455 million u.a. (1 u.a. = 1 dollar) and form part of the "radiation protection" and "applications of nuclear techniques to agricultural and medical research" programme (see "Research and Technology" No. 57).

** A study on the METALLURGICAL RESEARCH LABORATORIES in Germany is to be assigned by the Commission of the European Communities to the Battelle Institute, Frankfurt. Joint European research in the metallurgy sector, as desired by the Community countries, should be based on an accurate knowledge of what has been accomplished to date in each country. However, there is a total lack of such information in the case of some member countries, and the Commission has decided to start its overall study with West Germany, where the research effort in the field of materials is on a large scale and widely dispersed, and where there is no central documentation.

- ** A colloquium on RADIATION PROTECTION PROBLEMS RAISED BY TRANSURANIUM ELEMENTS, organized by the Commission of the European Communities in collaboration with the European Nuclear Energy Agency, is to be held at Karlsruhe on 21-23 September. Transuranium elements are becoming increasingly important in many research sectors and also in industry, and they create special health and safety problems because of their chemical and physical properties, which in many cases are little known by workers in the field of nuclear energy.
- ** A representative of the Commission attended the SIXTH CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF PRESTRESSING which was held in Prague from 6 to 13 June 1970 and which gave rise to a comprehensive examination of the most recent progress in the fields of prestressing research and techniques.

MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF DIPLOMAS

Reply by the Commission of the European Communities to a written question from Mr Hougardy, Belgian member of the European Parliament

1. The Commission is of the opinion that the proposals for a directive which it has forwarded to the Council, and which aim at securing mutual recognition of diplomas, or transitional measures on the subject, for various vocations (architect, engineer, doctor, pharmacist, dentist, nurse, optician and midwife), should be adopted by the Council as quickly as possible and put into force by the Member States at the dates stated in the relevant texts.

The Commission considers this is a matter of urgency because of the importance of these directives as regards the achievement of freedom of establishment, and more generally - as the honourable member notes - because of the effect they will have in persuading public opinion of the need for going further ahead with European integration.

2. Along with the proposals for a directive on the mutual recognition of diplomas, the Commission has presented proposals for a directive aiming at the coordination of certain legislative, regulatory and administrative provisions; wherever necessary, these proposals provide for a certain harmonization of training programmes, deemed an indispensable preliminary to the mutual recognition of diplomas (e.g. proposals for a directive concerning architects, medical specialists, pharmacists, dentists, opticians and nurses).
3. The Commission is aware of the fact that, while its proposals for a directive on the mutual recognition of diplomas constitute an important step towards the harmonization of training methods within the Community, it is nonetheless desirable to attain a greater degree of harmonization of the actual study programmes than that which has been deemed absolutely essential for bringing about such recognition.

The Commission is accordingly working with all due speed on the alignment of these programmes, particularly as regards the training of doctors and engineers.

4. As regards the new disciplines, the Commission draws attention to the fact that from 1964 onwards it prepared, with the help of national experts, and subsequently disseminated programmes for the training of higher technicians in the nuclear field. Furthermore, it is convinced of the necessity of initiating cooperation between higher educational and research institutions, particularly at the level of post-graduate training in the advanced fields, in order to meet as fully as possible the needs for specialists of a very high standard. Studies directed towards the formulation of proposals along these lines, particularly in the field of computer science, are being conducted in the competent departments of the Commission and the Working Group on Scientific and Technical Research Policy.

A Five-Year Programme of Aid to Coal Research in the Community

According to a report on the results of coal research carried out in the Community with financial backing from the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the commitments assumed by that body in 1958-69 totalled 34.5 million units of account (1 unit of account = 1 dollar), apportioned among some 120 contracts. 35 of these, representing aid amounting to almost 11 million u.a., are current contracts. (Research contracts usually cover a period of 2-4 years.)

During the last ten years this Community aid has accounted for 10-15% of the total coal research in the Community, and 15-30% (depending on the organizations) of the research conducted in the Community national centres.

As regards the near future, a medium-term programme (1970-74) of aid to technical research on coal has recently been approved by the Commission of the European Communities, prior to being forwarded for information to the Consultative Committee of the European Coal and Steel Community and to the Council of Ministers of the Community. This programme was prepared after consultation with representatives of coal producers, research institutes, universities and trade unions, and was compiled by choosing, on the basis of criteria designed to render such research as effective as possible at Community level, priority fields in which coal research could be undertaken or was already in progress.

The aim of this programme is to ensure a concentration of effort in those sectors most likely to yield concrete results, to facilitate the selection of requests for aid and to determine the most important projects for financing by the Commission of the European Communities.