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STATEMENT BY MR. GUIDO BRUNNER TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ON 20 FEBRUARY 1975 ON THE COMMUNITY'S ENERGY RESEARCH POLICY (1)

Without Community energy research there can be no Community energy strategy. We are at present preparing an energy research programme, under which Community energy research will be allocated about 150 million u.a. per year. In comparison with what the Member States spend on energy research, 1 000 million u.a. per year, it could be argued that this is a small and insignificant amount.

This is not true, however: as we can have no Community energy strategy without energy research, it is necessary to carry out common energy research. This is a political reason. If we do not move step by step towards a common energy strategy, albeit by stages, we will not get to grips with the balance of payments problem and it will not be possible to bridge the gap between deficit and surplus countries in the Community. We will therefore make no advance towards economic and monetary union and hence no advance towards political union. One thing depends on another here, and energy research is an important link in the chain.

There is in addition an economic reason. If we seriously intend to reduce the Community's dependence on oil imports from non-member countries, we must develop other sources. Is it possible to develop such sources without energy research? Obviously not. This is the second reason, an economic one, why we need Community energy research.

There is a third reason, relating specifically to research policy. We carry out Community energy research because we want to coordinate the research efforts of the Community countries in this field. Last year, in 1974, we finally succeeded in drawing up a balance sheet of the efforts of the Community countries in the field of energy research. It took several years to persuade the nine Member States to cooperate in this.

In the field of hydrogen and fusion research the Community holds a leading position in the world. We thus have a reputation to defend in the matter of research policy, and must be ready to spend money.

On 8 January the Commission adopted an energy research programme, which is before its committees. It is hoped that it will be adopted by the Council of Ministers in April. It embraces the following fields:

energy savings, manufacture and use of hydrogen as a new energy carrier, use of solar energy and the heat of the earth, systems analysis, and the treatment and elimination of radioactive waste. I think that research in these fields is an important, indeed a decisive factor in the development of other sources and in ensuring rational energy savings in the Community.

(1) Vandewiele report

In the longer term, this programme will eventually help us to put our energy supplies on a broader basis. We have chosen these priorities deliberately and allocated the funds in such a way that we can go forward surely: the Community will work only in fields where the Member States are not attacking problems in a sufficiently broad and coordinated manner. We will not duplicate the work of others and not spend money unnecessarily. On the contrary, we hope that through our coordinating function we may enable Member States to avoid some unnecessary expenditure which they would otherwise have incurred. This is a further indication that the Community research effort is economically sound and justified.

How does such a Community programme, or to take a more comprehensive view, how does the energy strategy as a whole fit in with what is happening in the Energy Agency in Paris? We can say this in reply: we as a Community are beginning to develop a personality in the field of research. This is no empty phrase. It has a meaning in terms of energy policy, economic policy and integration policy. But our projects are open ones. We hope that through cooperation in the projects of others, and conversely through their cooperation in our projects we will make an overall gain and also contribute as a Community to world progress.