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Report

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and
Consumer Protection

on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the
Council (Doc. 245/78) for a decision reviewing the second multiannual research
and development programme for the European Economic Community in the
environmental field (indirect action) adopted by Decision 76/311/EEC

Rapporteur: Mrs M.L. CASSANMAGNAGO CERRETTI

1.2.1

PE 55.499/fin.

By letter of 18 July 1978 the Council of the European Communities requested the European Parliament to deliver an opinion on a proposal for a Council decision reviewing the second multiannual research and development programme for the European Economic Community in the environmental field (indirect action) adopted by Decision 76/311/EEC.

On 11 September 1978 the President of the European Parliament referred this proposal to the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection as the committee responsible and to the Committee on Budgets and the Committee on Energy and Research for their opinions.

At its meeting of 25 September 1978 the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection appointed Mrs CASSANMAGNAGO CERRETTI rapporteur.

It considered this proposal at its meetings of 26 September and 18 October 1978 and at the latter meeting unanimously adopted the motion for a resolution and explanatory statement.

Present: Mrs Krouwel-Vlam, chairman; Mr Jahn, vice-chairman; Mr Noé, deputy rapporteur; Mr Andersen, Mr Brown, Mr Granet, Mr Lamberts, Mr Ney and Mrs Squarcialupi.

The opinions of the Committee on Budgets and of the Committee on Energy and Research are attached.

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The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection hereby submits to the European Parliament the following motion for a resolution together with explanatory statement:

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

embodying the opinion of the European Parliament on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council for a decision reviewing the second multiannual research and development programme for the European Economic Community in the environmental field (indirect action) adopted by Decision 76/311/EEC

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities¹,
 - having been consulted by the Council pursuant to Article 235 of the EEC Treaty (Doc. 245/78),
 - having regard to its resolution of 14 November 1975 on the proposal for a Council decision on a second multiannual research programme²,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection and the opinions of the Committee on Budgets and the Committee on Energy and Research (Doc. 409/78),
1. Notes that this proposal from the Commission means that contract work over the period 1976-1980 is being considerably increased on the basis of a thorough assessment of research requirements;
 2. Shares the Commission's view that the implementation of the environmental action programme should continue at the present level and that its success still largely depends on the scientific and technical support of specialized national laboratories;
 3. Requests the Commission, in observance of the principle that preventive action must be taken against all forms of pollution, to concentrate environmental research increasingly on pinpointing 'nuisances' in good time so as to be able to combat them effectively;
 4. Reiterates its request to the Commission to aim at increasing coordination of national and Community environmental research activities, so that indirect and direct actions may complement each other in an optimal manner;

¹ OJ No. C 173, 20.7.78, p.3

² OJ No. C 280, 8.12.75, p.59

5. Urges the Commission always to include the financial consequences of new multiannual programmes and of reviews of such programmes in the general budget of the European Communities;
6. Calls on the Council to approve the review of this research programme without delay;
7. Approves the proposal subject to the above comments.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENTI. INTRODUCTION

1. The second multiannual research and development programme in the environmental field for the period 1976-1980 (= contract work) was approved by the Council on 15 March 1976. It consists of four main areas:

- (a) research aimed at the establishment of criteria (exposure/effect ratios) for heavy metals, organic micropollutants, fibrous material, new chemicals, air and water pollution, waste heat and noise;
- (b) research and development on environmental information management (extension of the ECDIN project and evaluation of the results);
- (c) research and development on the reduction and prevention of pollution and nuisances (including the application of 'clean' technologies);
- (d) research and development related to the protection of the natural environment.

2. The second research programme was divided into two phases. The first phase provided information on the parts of the programme that required revision for the second phase. For a detailed description of each of the four projects, see Chapter III A of the Commission's proposal (pages 6 to 15).

3. In brief, the proposal is primarily concerned with the expansion of activities relating to organic micropollutants in water, the introduction of a notification procedure for new chemicals, the control of intermediary products forming during the manufacturing process, further research into asbestos, the implementation of research projects on marine pollution, the development of 'clean' technologies to combat water pollution, the study of ecosystems and biogeochemical cycles. 65 to 70% of all funds is to be earmarked for these areas. The revision of this research programme is intended to raise Community appropriations from 16m u.a. to 20.8 m EUA. The largest portion of the Community funds available for Community action will again go to the first research area (see 1(a)).

4. In addition, the programme is being implemented in the form of Community actions partly financed from the Community's budget in the case of contracts and with national funds in the case of concerted actions. Coordination costs are, however, charged to the Community budget.

5. It should also be pointed out that the Advisory Committee on Programme Management for Environmental Research has delivered a unanimously favourable opinion on this proposal.

II. SPECIFIC REMARKS

6. The Council's decision of 15 March 1976 adopting the second research programme contained, in Article 4, the provision that the programme might, on a proposal from the Commission, be reviewed to adapt it to developments in research requirements and to the needs of the new environmental programme. This review was to be prepared in 1977.

7. The research programme has fallen somewhat behind schedule due to the Council's decision not being taken until mid-March 1976 and the consequent delay in making a start on the programme.

8. Furthermore, it is somewhat disappointing that many sound proposals for the implementation of the second research programme¹ received in reply to the call for tenders published in the Official Journal on 3 April 1976 had to be rejected or reduced by the Commission because of the limited funds made available. Only about 13% of the funds requested could be granted. Naturally, the selection procedure took a great deal of time.

9. It should also be remembered that according to information provided by the Commission the continuity of this research programme will be seriously threatened if the Council is unable to take a decision in good time on the review (i.e. extension and addition of new projects) of the research, which has been considerably reduced in comparison with what is potentially feasible and which the committee can only regard as a minimum programme.

10. The committee therefore urges that the environmental action programme be continued at its present level. If the complicated problems facing each Member State, either as a result of similar situations or as a consequence of transfrontier incidents, are to be solved, very specialized research will be required, and solutions are most likely to be found if the research is carried on in institutes throughout the Community cooperating closely one with the other.

11. In this context the question arises as to the extent to which the emphasis in environmental management can be shifted from checking and reducing pollution to preventing it. In other words, what progress has been made in the development of non-polluting technologies? The committee would like to see a review of the results achieved in the second environmental report.

¹OJ No. C 78, 3.4.76, p.2.

12. As stated above, the environment action programme can be implemented only if it is based on sound research. The Commission is having this research carried out in the form of direct and indirect action. These actions carried out at various levels should complement each other in an optimal manner.

13. In its opinion on the review of this research programme, the Committee on Budgets disagrees with, and requests the withdrawal of, the major change proposed to the actual decision-making procedure.

14. The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection cannot endorse this position. It takes the view that provisions such as those contained in Article 2 can be retained as they stand in specific Council decisions on condition that prior allowance has been made for their financial implications in the general budget of the European Communities; this will permit both more effective assessment in the light of budgetary policy, of reviews of research programmes such as the one at present under consideration, and the full exercise of the European Parliament's budgetary powers. The necessary staff and payment and commitment appropriations have already been included in full in the 1979 draft budget. Provision has partly been made for these appropriations in item 3354, 'Environment', and in Chapter 100.

III. CONCLUSION

15. In view of the fact that the financial implications of the present proposal have already been allowed for in the draft budget and that a decision must be taken without delay in order not to disrupt the continuity of research activities which have already been reduced to a minimum, the committee hereby delivers, subject to the above reservations and at variance with the Committee on Budgets, a favourable opinion on the present proposal.

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON BUDGETS

Letter from the chairman of the Committee on Budgets to Mrs KROUWEL-VLAM, chairman of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection.

Luxembourg, 6 October 1978

Dear Mrs Krouwel-Vlam,

At its meeting of 2/3 October 1978 the Committee on Budgets considered the proposal for a decision.

The committee rejected the document in question and requested the Commission to withdraw it. The proposal for a decision does not meet the requirements of budgetary policy or budgetary procedure. It may indeed be possible to use the method proposed to revise the research programme, but not to increase appropriations or staff. This should have been done at the time of the preliminary draft or the letter of amendment; the programme could then have been adapted to the new financial situation without further formalities on completion of the budgetary procedure.

On no account, however, is it permissible to adopt the opposite method of, in this case, putting a figure to the additional funds in Article 2 of the proposal for a decision.

Yours sincerely,

(sgd) Erwin LANGE

Present: Mr LANGE, chairman; Mr BANGEMANN, vice-chairman; Lord BESSBOROUGH, Lord BRUCE of DONINGTON, Mrs DAHLERUP, Mr SCHREIBER, Mr SCOTT-HOPKINS, Mr SHAW and Mr SPINELLI

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND RESEARCH

Draftsman of opinion: Mr J. H. LAMBERTS

On 18 September 1978 the Committee on Energy and Research appointed Mr J. LAMBERTS draftsman.

It considered the draft opinion at its meetings of 28 September and 19 October 1978 and adopted it unanimously at the latter meeting.

Present: Mrs WALZ, chairman; Mr FLAMIG, vice-chairman;
Mr LAMBERTS, draftsman; Mr EDWARDS, Mr FIORET, Mr FUCHS,
Mr IBRUGGER, Mr NOE, Mr OSBORN and Mr VERHAEGEN.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The second environmental research programme adopted by the Council in March 1976 was the subject of a report by the Committee on Public Health and the Environment (rapporteur: Mr JAHN, Doc. 328/75) and an opinion by the Committee on Energy, Research and Technology (draftsman: Mr W. MÜLLER).

2. Article 4 of the Council Decision provided for a review and possible revision of the programme. A proposal for a revision has now been submitted and the Committee on Energy and Research has been requested to deliver an opinion for the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection.

3. Having been asked for an opinion, the committee can only comment on those aspects of the proposal concerned with the policies on energy and research. Nevertheless the draftsman would like to round off this document with some general remarks on the research programme which he hopes the Commission will take into account when the time comes to draw up a third environmental research programme.

II ENERGY POLICY ASPECTS

4. The programme covers four main research areas, of which the first is by far the most extensive (taking up 70% of the total funding). Under this first heading, analysis will be made of 'exposure-effect relationships' or, in other words, criteria will be established for pollutants with regard to their effect on health and the environment.

One point made in the committee's opinion following the submission of the environmental research programme in 1975 needs to be reiterated, namely that the problems of pollution and nuisances caused by various means of energy production are only given peripheral treatment in the research programme as a whole. Specific mention, however, is made of **waste** heat and marine pollution, particularly pollution by oil.

5. It cannot be denied that the creation of a reasonable balance between energy production, with demand possibly increasing as a function of economic and social progress, and the protection of the environment can be both difficult and expensive, but it is by no means necessary for these two aims to conflict. One of the most obvious opportunities to promote both energy production and environmental protection lies in the sub-project on 'waste heat' or thermal pollution (point 1.7 of the Commission document).

The Commission says here that 'the advisability of coordinating national research in this area under a concerted action will be assessed' and 'the current ... (financial) ... effort may be maintained'.

6. This committee has, in various opinions, stressed the importance of utilizing the waste heat which arises as a 'by-product' of electricity production in power stations irrespective of the fuel being used. The most economical utilization of this waste heat would appear to be in a long-range heating grid (this possibility is examined in the report by Mr NOE' drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Public Health and the Environment on the problems of pollution and nuisances originating from energy production - Doc. 320/74). A combined electricity and heat production system can ensure both rational utilization of energy and protection of the natural environment.

The Committee on Energy and Research therefore urges the Commission to continue and indeed intensify its efforts as proposed under point 1.7. Since many studies have already been made of this subject in the various Member States, the Committee on Energy and Research must emphasize that the research envisaged would most appropriately be effected as a concerted action so as to present the smallest possible charge to the Community's budget.

7. The committee welcomes the Commission's intention to give priority to a study of the problems concerned with oil pollution (point 1.8 of the Commission document) and to increase expenditure on it. The relevance of this was underlined by the 'Amoco Cadiz' disaster, the latest case of widespread oil pollution, which took on enormous proportions and whose consequences can barely be grasped even now.

Furthermore, a study such as this can also be of great use in drawing up a contingency plan to deal with accidents involving the oil rigs in the North Sea where crude oil production is now increasing rapidly.

8. The final energy policy aspect to be noted is the sub-topic which comes under the research area 'ecosystems ecology and biogeochemical cycles' and is concerned with 'CO₂ accumulation' (point 4.1.3 of the Commission document).

It is not apparent from the Commission's document that there is any intention of increasing the effort in this area as a result of this review of the research programme. Since all responsible authorities in the Community, and in particular the European Parliament and this committee, have repeatedly emphasized the need to increase the Community's utilization of its own energy sources (particularly in order to ensure safe energy supplies and to reduce dependence on imported energy), the committee has to deplore the fact that research into this vital area is not given higher priority. It is clear that one of the nuisances produced by fossil fuels is harmful emissions of CO₂. Since considerable research is being carried out in this field in many of the Member States, the Commission is recommended to consider the possibility of initiating concerted action.

III. RESEARCH POLICY ASPECTS

9. This committee has always maintained that, where possible, the Community must encourage every effort to coordinate research which is already being carried out in the Member States and that the Community should only step in when national research needs to be reinforced. The committee has had to recognize that the Community has only limited (indeed apparently increasingly limited) budgetary resources at its disposal for the research sector. A realistic assessment must therefore be made if these limited resources are to be used rationally, i.e. coordination of national research must be given priority in the form of indirect or concerted actions. The Commission must ensure, as indeed it appears to be doing, that contact is maintained between the various forms of action, including the direct actions under the JRC, within both the energy and environment sectors. But it has also been emphasized that research must be carried out in the form of concerted actions not merely whenever they are expedient but also whenever they are feasible. It is therefore pleasing to note that the research already carried out under this programme has led to increased coordination of national research activities or an exchange of information about them, as is noted in various places in the Commission's document.

10. On the basis of these remarks, the Committee on Energy and Research is able to approve the Commission's proposed revision as put forward in this document. The opinion which this committee issued following submission of the second environmental research programme can still be regarded as valid (opinion by Mr W. MULLER in the report by

Mr JAHN - Doc. 328/75). The committee recognizes that it may be difficult to make any large-scale changes in an on-going programme. Nevertheless the draftsman feels that he should express his opinion that certain changes ought to be made and a new approach adopted if and when the Commission submits a proposal for a third environmental research programme. These ideas are reproduced below.

IV. NEW PERSPECTIVES FOR THE COMMUNITY'S ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH

11. It has already been stated above that a harmonious balance ought to be created between energy production and the need to protect the environment. Although we do already have some knowledge of the effects of energy production on the environment and human health and of the means to solve these problems, your draftsman would maintain that this knowledge is being put to good use far too slowly. This criticism applies both to national governments and to the Community. The Community ought to take the initiative to change this state of affairs.

12. We now know for instance that a number of harmful substances do somehow find their way into nature from oil-fired, coal-fired and nuclear power stations. These substances together with those released into the air and water by oil refineries, are often acted upon by climatic factors such as cold fog and ultra-violet light, ozone or heat inversion to produce such phenomena as smog in the larger cities such as London, Cologne and Rotterdam.

13. Much is known about the causes and effects of the absorption of harmful substances by the human body from water, food or air and also about how the effects can be avoided. Harmful substances often act directly and/or indirectly through changes in cell and tissue structures. Even though we are aware of some of the immediate effects, the long-term consequences can be difficult to predict. They may be catastrophic and action must be taken without delay.

Causal relationships which are known to exist and which demand remedial measures are not examined in any depth in any of the programme's research areas even though a proposal for a solution to these problems would have been highly relevant. It must be admitted, however, that a lot of research work remains to be done.

14. The draftsman considers that the existing research programme can be criticized for dealing only with disjointed fragments of a larger whole without the support of an overall objective. Any future environmental programme must correct this. It may be necessary to limit the number of areas of investigation so as to make possible greater efforts in individual areas where the Community can perform successful and effective work.

15. If research in the Community is to serve any purpose, it is vital that binding legislation in the form of Community directives be proposed and adopted as soon as it becomes possible to apply the knowledge gained of a subject in practice. (There is a parallel here with the proposal to set up a registration system in a directive regulating the trade in and use of dangerous preparations - Doc. 181/78). As recently as July of this year the European Parliament effectively adopted the principle that the protection of European citizens' health is more important than the vested interests of the chemical industry.

16. The production of energy has clear effects on the environment and human health. Even if harmful effects to human health cannot be ascribed solely to the energy sector, it is nonetheless significant that up to 10% of the western world's gross national product is spent on health, that is to say with the purpose of curing medical disorders. These resources ought instead to be used on preventive measures. These would include preventing notoriously dangerous substances, whether they emanate from the energy sector or any other sector of the economy, from escaping into nature and affecting the quality of water, air and foodstuffs. Clearly most countries and the European Community direct much of their effort towards the last link in the 'exposure-effect' chain even though it is the least effective and most costly solution seen in economic, social and human terms.

17. Your draftsman considers it imperative that a body should be constituted of experts from various branches of science, with the task of analysing the whole field of environmental and health protection. On the basis of this body's investigations, a proposal ought rapidly to be submitted and decisions taken on measures of a binding nature possibly by way of directives. This must be done before industrial activity becomes a serious threat to public health.

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