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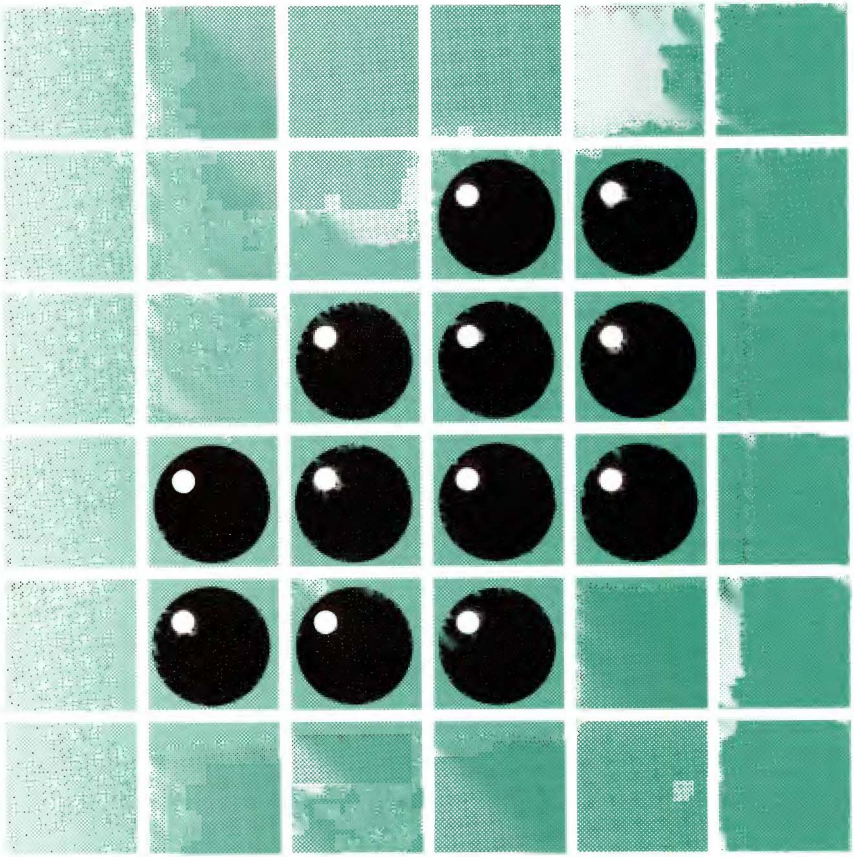
THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT



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Introduction

Every so often incidents occur that bring home to us not only how tenuous is our grip on technology, but also how fragile is the environment upon which we depend for our everyday life and future survival.

Such incidents as the Chernobyl nuclear plant accident, the Bhopal gas disaster, the Seveso chemical leak and the Amoco Cadiz oil spill serve to demonstrate only too starkly the price all of us can be forced to pay for economic progress.

These large-scale accidents may be rare, but it is little wonder that when they do occur, they catalyse public concern about the endangered state of the environment and the pressing need to protect and safeguard it. They also force a questioning of the pace at which we are developing and the cost involved in that development.

The relationship between economic growth and the protection of the environment — twin objectives which might at first sight appear contradictory — is at the heart of the European Community's environment policy.

That policy is now nearly 15 years old. It was conceived in a period of relative prosperity and stability in Europe, but has been implemented against a backdrop of worsening recession. In practice, this has meant that all too often the ideals of protecting the environment and conserving wildlife and natural resources have given way to the everyday need to keep Europe's battered economies afloat.

Now, as the Community's environment policy has evolved and matured, as it has taken its place alongside other European policies, it has come to be seen that lasting economic growth can only be achieved within the framework of a protected environment, since the natural resources of the environment constitute not only the basis of but also the limits to economic growth.

This booklet traces the evolution of the Community's environment policy and examines how this inter-relationship between the economy and the environment has been given practical expression. It looks at the many successes and achievements of the policy — and some of the difficulties it faces — in helping to preserve the environment both in Europe and at the wider international level.

It also discusses some of the substantial body of work that remains to be done and the new blueprint for the future of the Community's environment policy drawn up by the European Commission.

I — The environment and the threats it faces

Concern about the potentially harmful effects people can have on the environment is not a new phenomenon. The ancient Chinese and Greeks had legislation to protect the soil, while in thirteenth century England, measures were taken to control air pollution. The world's first national park was established at Yellowstone in the United States over 100 years ago.

It is only since the 1950s and 1960s, however, that wider awareness of the long-term and unsustainable damage being caused by people to the environment has begun to grow. Examples of that damage, both in the cities and in the countryside, were not hard to find.

Pollution

Some were more obvious than others. The chief threat, and the most serious, was pollution.

(i) In industry, factories and other plants involved in all forms of manufacturing produce wastes and effluents including some highly dangerous and noxious substances, such as certain chemicals and heavy metals (lead, mercury, cadmium, etc.). As well as frequently posing a direct health risk to man, industrial pollution causes damage to the environment, wherever it occurs.

(ii) In lakes, rivers and the sea, pollutants can poison fish, the micro-organisms they feed on and aquatic plant life and make the water unsafe for bathing and other leisure activities as well as for use as drinking water and for other domestic purposes.

Particular hazards may be caused by products that are toxic, persistent and bio-accumulative. These substances cannot be broken down by nature's usual processes and tend to accumulate in the bodies of animals that come into contact with them.

The harm caused by these substances is therefore potentially multiplied since it has both a direct and an indirect effect. For example, mercury accumulated inside a micro-organism will be passed on to the fish that eats it and again on to a larger predator that eats the fish and so on up the food chain to man.

(iii) In the atmosphere, pollutants, such as certain chemical gases and dusts, are scattered by the wind over large areas. Some airborne pollutants, like sulphur dioxide (SO_2), fall to earth again as 'acid deposits', poisoning the life out of lakes and rivers, contaminating crops, damaging forests and woodlands, and corroding metal structures and paintwork.

(iv) In the earth, pollutants can break down the natural structure of the soil, rendering it infertile or reducing its crop-yielding potential. Pollutants also seep through the soil to contaminate underground water sources, posing a health risk to humans and to domestic and wild animals.

Similarly, the potential health risks involved with the production, manufacture and use of many chemicals, such as chlorofluorocarbons, chloride compounds and pesticides, have only emerged in the past 25 years. Asbestos, a product widely used for insulation and fire-proofing is today recognized as a potential killer, whose fibres attack the respiratory system. In the same way, lead was commonly used in the manufacture of paint, until concern at its health risks led to tighter controls.

The rapid spread of urbanization

Already Europe is one of the most densely populated regions of the world. If you draw a circle with a 400 kilometre diameter centred on Lille in north-eastern France, you will encircle the industrial heartland of Europe — encompassing the Ruhr and Rhine valleys, Antwerp, Brussels, northern France, Randstad Holland, Greater London and the Midlands, the industrial heart of the UK.

As it stands this high concentration of industry and population means heavy pollution and all the signs are that current growth will increase at faster rates in the future. The pace of post-war industrial expansion has led to unprecedented urban development.

Unfortunately the vast majority of this development has been achieved at heavy cost to the environment. The urban landscape itself has been scarred by careless planning and over-hasty development. In addition to the spread of housing and factories, industrial expansion has spawned a vast network of roads, rail links and other infrastructure to feed it.

The pace of urban sprawl has increasingly led to social problems some of which have been directly linked to the degradation of the urban environment and the approach to urban renewal adopted by many planners, that takes little account of the sense of community in different parts of a city.

The changing shape of the countryside

Modern-day farming techniques and current EEC farm support policies, have encouraged a shift to intensive or 'industrial' farming, with the stress laid on maximizing production, often irrespective of demand. Guaranteed a fixed price for virtually whatever they produce, many farmers have tended to uproot woodlands and hedgerows and drain off marshlands to make maximum use of their available land. This however deprives dozens of species of flora and fauna of their natural habitats. Marshes and other wetlands provide valuable breeding grounds for wild birds and staging points for migratory species. Hedgerows and woods are habitats for countless species of insects, birds and small mammals as well as wild flowers and plants.

All these threats to the environment are comparatively tangible. Their effects on the environment can be seen either immediately or within a relatively short period of time. But there are other dangers too, that are less tangible and less readily visible, and therefore perhaps all the more serious.

The depletion of natural resources

Take, for example, the depletion of natural resources, such as fossil fuels (oil, gas, coal, etc.) and even land. These resources are finite and their exploitation therefore needs to be managed rationally, with an eye to the future. Without such careful husbandry, irreparable damage could be caused.

Serious harm can also be caused by careless management of non-finite resources. The fast destruction of rain forests in South America and parts of Africa, for example, to clear land for building or agriculture or exports of timber, could have far-reaching consequences for the Earth's climate.

Trees, like all plants, absorb carbon dioxide (CO_2) and other gases, and 'exhale' life-giving oxygen. Twelve spruce trees are estimated to produce the daily oxygen requirement of one man, while a 100-year old beech tree purifies the air content of 800 homes annually.

Heavy concentrations of trees and plants, as in tropical rain forests, are therefore crucial to maintaining the climatic balance. The clearing of forests deprives the atmosphere of an important purifying element and allows an increasing amount of CO_2 to escape into the upper atmosphere. This threatens to intensify what scientists call the 'greenhouse effect' — a thickening layer of CO_2 in the upper atmosphere that raises the temperature on the Earth's surface, affecting its climate.

The destruction of forests and other uncultivated areas also takes a heavy toll on the wildlife that lives and breeds under its cover. A healthy beech wood, for example, can be home to 7 000 animal species. The loss of these natural habitats has far reaching effects.

The spread of urbanization and industrialization has had disastrous effects on wild animals and plants — even though some species have shown a remarkable ability to adapt. Foxes, normally regarded as timid, countryside creatures, have become accomplished urban scavengers and rare wild flowers flourish along motorway embankments. All too often however man matches the unwitting harm he does to wildlife with deliberate hunting and killing of wild animals and birds for sport or economic gain.

II — The Community response

By the 1970s, environment had reached the top of the political agenda, particularly in the industrialized world. The United Nations Conference on the Environment in Stockholm in 1972 gave a global voice to widespread concern about the urgent need to control and arrest the long-lasting damage being caused to the environment, natural resources and public health. The very future of the planet that supports us was at stake.

The European Community responded at the European summit meeting in Paris in October 1972. Community Heads of State or Government acknowledged that the economic growth inspired and fostered by the Community had to be linked to improvements in living standards and quality of life of its citizens and to protection of the environment and natural resources. 'Economic expansion', the summit concluded, 'is not an end in itself'.

The Heads of State or Government laid down the principles of a Community environment policy. These stated that:

(i) the best environmental policy consists in preventing the creation of pollution at source rather than subsequently trying to counter their effects;

(ii) environmental policy can and must be compatible with economic and social development;

(iii) effect on the environment should be taken into account at the earliest possible stage in all technical planning and decision-making processes;

(iv) any exploitation of natural resources or anything which causes significant damage to the ecological balance must be avoided;

(v) standards of scientific and technological knowledge in the Community should be improved with a view to taking effective action to conserve and improve the environment and combat pollution and nuisances. Research in this field should therefore be encouraged;

(vi) the cost of preventing and eliminating nuisances must in principle be borne by the polluter;

(vii) care should be taken to ensure that activities carried out in one State do not cause any degradation of the environment in another State;

(viii) the Community and its Member States must take account in their environmental policy of the interests of the developing countries, and must in particu-

lar examine any repercussions of the measures contemplated under that policy on the economic development of such countries;

(ix) the Community and the Member States must make their voices heard in international organizations dealing with aspects of the environment and must make an original contribution to these organizations;

(x) the protection of the environment is a matter for all in the Community, who should therefore be made aware of its importance;

(xi) in each different category of pollution, it is necessary to establish the level of action that befits the type of pollution;

(xii) major aspects of environmental policy in individual countries must no longer be planned and implemented in isolation;

(xiii) Community environmental policy is aimed, as far as possible, at the coordinated and harmonized progress of national policies, without, however, hampering potential or actual progress at the national level. However, the latter should be carried out in a way that does not jeopardize the satisfactory operation of the common market.

The summit called on the European Commission to formulate a Community environment policy and just over a year later, on 22 November 1973, the Member States adopted the first Community action programme on the environment.[1]

The Commission defined 'the environment' as: 'the combination of elements whose complex inter-relationships make up the settings, the surroundings and the conditions of life of the individual and of society, as they are or as they are felt.'

This rather cumbersome-sounding definition covers both the natural environment (the countryside, its flora and fauna, rivers, lakes and the sea, the atmosphere, wildlife and their habitats, etc.) and the man-made environment (urban areas, the architectural heritage, and so on).

The primary aims of the new Community policy were to:

(i) prevent, reduce and as far as possible eliminate pollution and nuisances;

(ii) maintain a satisfactory ecological balance and ensure the protection of the biosphere;

(iii) ensure the sound management of and avoid any exploitation of resources or of nature which cause significant damage to the ecological balance;

(iv) guide development in accordance with quality requirements especially by improving working conditions and settings of life;

[1] Declaration of the Council in OJ C 112, 20. 12. 1973.

(v) ensure that more account is taken of environmental aspects in town planning and land use;

(vi) seek common solutions to environmental problems with States outside the Community, particularly in international organizations.

To translate these principles and aims into practice, the first EEC environmental action programme designated three broad categories of action:

(i) to reduce and prevent pollution and nuisances;

(ii) to improve the environment and the quality of life;

(iii) Community action, or where applicable, common action by the Member States in international organizations dealing with the environment.

The programme set out an ambitious range of actions to be taken to deal with existing water and air pollution problems, to improve the management of waste and to protect wildlife and natural habitats. It also laid down tight deadlines for specific proposals.

Not all those deadlines have been met. But, since 1973, well over 100 legislative texts of major importance to the quality of life and to the operation of its industries have been adopted.

The first four-year action programme was followed by second and third programmes, and a new programme, the fourth — to run for six years from 1987 to 1992 inclusive — is now being implemented.

In addition, the Member States have now formally recognized the crucial role of environment policy in all the Community's activities. In amendments to the Treaty of Rome, formulated in the Single European Act adopted in February 1986, the objectives of Community environment policy listed above are endorsed, as are the principles that preventive action should be taken, that environmental damage should be rectified at source and that the polluter should pay. The Act goes on to say: 'Environmental protection requirements shall be a component of the Community's other policies.'

Furthermore, in drawing up measures to achieve the priority of a common market, the Commission's proposals concerning health, environmental protection and consumer protection 'will take as a base a high level of protection'.

Before going on to examine in detail the achievements of the Community's environment policy to date, it is important to understand why it was thought necessary for the Community as such to become involved in this field of policy-making. After all, individual Member States had already implemented national measures with varying degrees of commitment and success.

In the United Kingdom, for example, controls on discharges of pollutants into the River Thames, and restrictions on the siting and operation of power stations using the river water for cooling purposes, had led to the return of salmon and other pollution-sensitive species to stretches of the river formerly so polluted that they could not sustain fish life.

In the Federal Republic of Germany, dust emissions from industry were cut by 65% during the 10 years from 1964 to 1974, using a combination of measures aimed at reducing production of dust, ensuring more efficient collection of waste dust and filtering it out of emissions. As a result of these actions, dust production from coal-fired power stations was cut by 73% over the 10 year period, by 50% in crude steel production, while the uniform grey coating of dust that used to mark the siting of cement factories has all but disappeared.

In many EEC countries, valuable historic buildings and sites have to be preserved from development by State intervention and wildlife and nature reserves established.

Legislation has also been passed aimed at controlling pollution and setting stricter environmental standards on industry, construction and planning.

What advantages could new Community action have over existing national measures? And how did the Community come to be involved in a field that was not originally provided for in its founding Treaty of Rome? The answer to these questions lies both in the nature of the European Community and in the problem of environmental protection itself.

III — The European Community and the environment

A commitment to improve living standards

The first and chief reason for European Community involvement in the environment is its long-standing commitment to improve the living and working conditions of its 320 million citizens in the 12 Member States. The Treaty of Rome, signed in 1957 by the original six Community members (France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg) lays down as one of its principal objectives:

'. . . the constant improvement of the living and working conditions of their people,' . . .[1]

This charges the Community with a clear responsibility to ensure that Europeans live and work in the best possible surroundings, that the air they breathe is clean, that the food they eat and the water they drink are as pure as possible and that they have access to nature as uncontaminated by the march of progress as possible.

Preserving free trade

The *second reason* for a Community environmental policy is that differences between national environmental legislation could affect the operation of the common market by creating distortions in competition and technical barriers to trade in the Community. If, for example, firms in one Community Member State were obliged to conform to stricter nationally-imposed anti-pollution requirements (the installation of often expensive purifying or emission control equipment, for example) than their counterparts in neighbouring EEC countries, their production costs would be higher and their ability to compete on equal terms therefore impaired. Similarly, if one country imposed tougher noise controls than its neighbours on, for example, construction site equipment or tighter exhaust emission curbs on motor vehicles, imports from other EEC countries might be hindered and free trade therefore suffer.

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[1] Preamble to the Treaty of Rome, 1957.

In both cases, the consumer would suffer too, either through increased prices passed on to him by the producers or through a narrowing of the range of goods available, restricting his freedom of choice.

The need for harmonization of legislation and/or technical standards at Community level has to be carefully examined case by case to safeguard both the good operation of the common market and the environment.

The international nature of the problem

The third reason for Community involvement in environmental policy stems directly from the nature of the Community and of the problem of protecting the environment.

Pollution does not stop at national boundaries. One country's waste all too easily becomes its neighbour's pollution; particularly water and air-borne pollution.

In the European Community, with its close geographical cohesion, the problem is particularly sensitive. Many Member States share common borders and draw their water from great rivers such as the Rhine and Meuse, lakes and streams, and are linked by shared canals and bounded by common seas.

International problems require international solutions. The Community, as the practical expression of unity and cooperation between 12 European nations, obviously has a role to play in settling disputes and in trying to ensure a coherent approach both to the problems and their solutions.

The Community can play this role more effectively than individual Member States working bilaterally or multilaterally, because it can take a broader, more complete view of the problems involved, untrammeled as it is by narrow, short-term considerations, such as national interest, electoral or party politics. This broader Community outlook spills over, too, into the wider international context. The nature of pollution makes it inevitable that disputes arise between countries and that governments and international organizations (like the United Nations and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) seek the widest possible support for pollution controls and other environmental agreements. The transfrontier nature of environmental problems has made the environment a leading field of international discussion and cooperation, cutting across ideological as well as geographical boundaries.

Pollution does not stop at national, nor even at Community frontiers. These are some of the tonnes of dead eels which were taken from the Rhine in Germany following a release of toxic substances into the river from a chemical factory near Basle, Switzerland. The killer chemicals destroyed all living matter (fish, eels, plants) along many miles of the Rhine, affecting France, Germany and the Netherlands, before being washed out into the North Sea.
(Photo Belga)

The Community has long played a role in this cooperation. Its experience in international negotiations makes the European Community both an effective spokesman for the Twelve — whose influence on the world stage is enhanced by their speaking with a united voice on key issues — and a valuable partner in helping the wider international community find solutions to common problems.

The Community has been a strong force in the development of common procedures for testing chemicals and exchanging information amongst the 24 nations in the OECD. The 1983 OECD Council Decision on the minimum pre-market set of data for the initial assessment of the hazards of chemical substances endorses a basic set of information that is essentially the same as that required in the Community. OECD member countries are obliged to implement the Council decisions, so that the Community has become part of a growing, harmonized international system of chemicals control.

One good example of the Community fulfilling both roles is in the field of transboundary air pollution. Scandinavian countries have long complained that toxic sulphur dioxide (SO_2) gases discharged into the atmosphere by factories and homes in the United Kingdom, Germany and other northern EEC Member States, are carried north on the winds and fall as 'acid rain', destroying forests and farm crops and poisoning plant and fish life in lakes and streams.

Efforts to find a solution to this problem — which is by no means confined to Scandinavia, since the damage caused by 'acid rain' is now being recognized within the Community itself — have been sought chiefly within the framework of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE). A convention aimed at reducing all forms of transboundary air pollution was signed in Geneva in 1979. The Community was closely involved in the negotiations leading up to the signature of the convention and became party to it along with the individual Member States.

Further examples of the Community's involvement in international efforts to protect the environment are given below.

Responding to public concern

In deciding to frame a European environmental policy, EEC governments were also responding to increased public concern about the state of the environment, both natural and manmade, and the threats it faces.

The blossoming of non-governmental environment pressure groups in the 1960s and 1970s bore witness to the growth in public awareness of the careless speed with which 20th century man appeared to be destroying his environment.

The European Community was inevitably playing a role in this destruction. The development of EEC policies in a widening number of spheres, from agriculture and energy to industry, transport and regional development, has in many cases shifted a share of the responsibility for environmental damage caused by the implementation of these policies onto the Community's shoulders.

While the individual Member States are still responsible for the way these policies are translated into national law in the vast majority of cases, the Community as such plays a coordinating and often initiating role.

IV — The economy and the environment

For all these reasons, then, European leaders recognized the need for an EEC environment policy and the clear role that the Community had in initiating and coordinating it.

Nevertheless, the question might reasonably be asked whether the European Community, as an economic union committed primarily to the promotion of sustained growth and development, would not find itself facing constantly conflicting objectives, since the desire to promote economic growth and the need to safeguard the environment could be seen as opposing ends. Environmental protection may seem a luxury only to be afforded in times of steady economic growth and too costly in periods of recession.

In past years of recession, particularly after the oil price shocks of the 1970s, with low or zero growth, persistent high inflation and balance of payments deficits, the decline of traditional 'smokestack' industries (coal, steel, shipbuilding, etc.) and the consequent sharp rise in unemployment, environmental protection tended to take second place behind the need to sustain economic activity. The desire to avoid imposing additional costs on struggling industries led to a reluctance on the part of some Community governments to agree to tougher pollution controls, land-use requirements and curbs on potentially dangerous materials or production processes. The tangible short-term costs to the economy of such measures all too often outweighed the frequently intangible and longer-term benefits to society of a healthier environment and substantial longer-term economic costs of failure to control pollution.

It is now recognized, however, that solid and lasting economic growth and effective environmental protection are not conflicting objectives, but are in fact interdependent. Future economic growth depends on the rational husbanding of natural resources, since these resources constitute both the basis for and the limits to economic development.

Protection of the environment is not a mere policy option. Its integration into overall economic planning is an absolute necessity. Strict environmental protection can be regarded as no less than properly-conceived long-term economic policy.

The European Community has recognized this interdependence. Its third environmental action programme, adopted in 1983, commits the Member States to a pre-

ventive environment policy that integrates the demands of protecting the environment into the planning and execution of all economic activities, be they in industry, agriculture, regional development, energy, transport or social policy.

The European Council reinforced this commitment at its meeting in March 1985 and acknowledged the contribution environment policy can make to improved economic growth and job creation. The close relationship between the environment and economic growth has also been recognized at a wider international level.

The leaders of the major western economies — the USA, Canada, Japan, the Federal Republic of Germany, France and the United Kingdom — called at the Bonn summit meeting in May 1985 for stronger international cooperation to solve urgent environmental problems and for wider application of the 'polluter pays' principle, under which a polluter is required to bear the cost of measures necessary to ensure compliance with pollution control standards.

The OECD and the United Nations have focused attention on the link between economic, trade and aid relations with the Third World and growing environmental problems in developing countries. Cheaper production costs and less stringent (sometimes even non-existent) environmental legislation in developing countries has led many big manufacturing companies to set up production plants in the Third World. The OECD has developed the concept of 'informed consent' in the field of export of dangerous materials, to try to ensure that developing countries are aware of the potentially harmful effects of the products they import.

The link between environment and economic policies

Everyday economic activities of all sorts have profound effects on the environment. Industry generates pollution and wastes. It exploits and may deplete or even exhaust natural resources. The construction of new industrial plants and the infrastructures to feed them affects the landscape and wildlife and its habitats. Modern intensive farming techniques, based on maximizing production, have changed the shape of the countryside irreversibly. At the same time, the geographical distribution of natural resources, of rivers and lakes, coal and mineral deposits, soil types and so on, governs in part the location of industrial activities.

On the other hand, economic activities help to determine the type of environment policy pursued and its evolution.

They also show areas where environmental problems may be diminishing, such as in declining industries like iron and steel or textiles.

Technological innovation fostered by industrial research can produce new methods of pollution control or monitoring and of course a healthy economy generates the necessary finance for investment in environmental protection, urban renewal and so on.

Environment policy has both direct and indirect effects on economic activity. It may act as a direct contraint, imposing limits on the emission of pollutants, restrictions on plant design, product characteristics, planning and land use. These in turn affect production costs and prices, competitiveness and profitability, demand and employment. These effects feed downstream to associated industries, like suppliers and retailers, and ultimately to the man in the street, influencing his preferences and patterns of consumption.

The costs and benefits of environment policy

'The benefits generated by environmental measures (including the damage costs avoided) have generally been greater than their costs' (OECD Conference on Environment and Economics, June 1984).

While the links between environment and economic policies are relatively easy to establish, the balance of costs and benefits in this relationship is less readily assessed.

Environment policy imposes a variety of costs on industry. It may require the installation of filters to control pollution or monitoring equipment to ensure permitted emission levels are not exceeded. It may also put a stop to the use of certain hazardous materials or production processes. It may require strict labelling of goods, safety controls and regular medical checks for employees. It may also require changes in the design of products to render them less environmentally damaging.

These costs are often passed on to society as a whole. Producers may offset their increased costs by raising consumer prices. Environmental requirements might inhibit expansion and investment, and sometimes even lead to plant closures, resulting in lost jobs or the switching of investment to countries with less stringent environment policies.

However, it is unlikely that significant job losses occur as a direct result of environmental policy. Even in traditional industries environmental legislation may influence the timing of plant closures, but it is unlikely to be the crucial factor that determines economic viability.

Against these often all too visible costs to the economy of environment policy, it may seem impossible to assess in traditional financial terms the benefits to society of a healthier environment, of purer air and water, of wildlife conservation, protected landscapes and a well-preserved architectural heritage.

Nevertheless, it is readily apparent that these benefits must be considerable if one considers the cost to society of cleaning up pollution, of repairing damage caused by it, or indeed of having no pollution controls at all. Moreover some benefits can be measured in hard financial terms — for example, the countryside and our architectural heritage can increase revenues from tourism and other leisure uses.

The costs of pollution

The OECD has calculated that the inflationary effect of environment policies — that is, their effect on producer costs, consumer prices and the cost of living — has on average been very small.

Public spending on the environment in OECD countries, which include all Community Member States, the USA, Canada and Japan, averages between 1 and 2% of gross domestic product (GDP) each year. However, these countries spend on average between 3 and 5% of GDP annually repairing the damage caused by pollution.

Table: Estimated expenditure on environmental protection in Community Member States, 1978

	Total expenditure (million ECU)
Belgium	(290)
Denmark	435
France	2 970
Germany	7 854[1]
Greece	107
Ireland	(90)
Italy	n.d.
Luxembourg	n.d.
Netherlands	1 412[2]
Portugal	20
Spain	(175)
United Kingdom	(3 608)

Notes: ( ) Estimated.
[1] Revised data.
[2] Revised 1980 data.
[3] Partial data.

Source: data from SEMA Metra 1986.

A study[1] of the breakdown of expenditure on pollution control, environmental conservation and environmental improvement in France, Germany and the Netherlands has shown that in 1983, France spent a total of 7 000 million ECU, Germany 13 000 million ECU and the Netherlands (1982) 1 700 million. This represented 1.2% of GDP in France and the Netherlands and 1.7% in Germany. It also repre-

[1] *Source:* SEMA Metra 1986, quoted in 'State of environment' report.

sents a cost per inhabitant ranging from 118 ECU in the Netherlands to 206 ECU in Germany.

The main item on the bill in all cases was water treatment, accounting for between 40 and 50% of the total. Waste collection and disposal represented between 20 and 30% and air pollution between 9% in France and 29% in Germany, where a particularly active campaign is being waged against acid rain.

Petrol combustion in motor vehicles is a major threat to the environment. The resulting exhaust fumes cause many millions of pounds worth of damage each year to forests, lakes, buildings and farm crops.
(Photo Belga)

The European Commission has estimated that atmospheric pollution resulting from the combustion of fossil fuels in power plants, motor vehicles and central heating plants causes damage to forests, lakes, crops and buildings in the Community that may be as high as 4 000 million ECU a year. This figure does not include the as yet unquantifiable cost of damage to health among the population.

Pollution damages buildings and other infrastructure, imposing additional costs of maintenance and repair. It inhibits plant growth, reducing agricultural yields and increasing the need for fertilizers, and contaminates water supplies, imposing heavy purification costs. Pollution may also impair the health of workers, reducing their productivity or imposing long-term medical costs. The impact of other forms of pollution may also only become apparent in the longer term. Chemical and nuclear pollution, for example, have effects which may only be felt many years after the event.

Disposal of wastes also causes pollution and ties up land that could be put to more productive uses. The Community's waste management industries handle 2 000 million tonnes of waste a year. Three quarters of this waste is buried, yet 80% of it could be recycled for raw materials or energy use in industry and agriculture. This would represent a saving of between 5 000 million and 7 000 million ECU a year. Recycling waste is particularly important for the Community since it depends on imports for 56% of its energy needs, 50% of its paper and wood pulp and between 80 and 90% of its metals.

Clearly then, an active environment policy based on the principle that prevention of pollution is better than cleaning it up, could result in substantial savings to the Community's economy.

But apart from potential savings, environment policy has other economic benefits.

Employment

Environment policy creates jobs in industries, services and administration specifically linked to environmental protection and in other associated industries 'downstream'.

Unemployment in the Community (excluding Greece, Portugal and Spain) has surged from just over 2 million — or 2% of the total workforce — in 1970 to about 10 million — or 11% of the workforce today. In this context, there is growing appreciation of the potential contribution of environmental schemes to job creation.

Over recent years a number of Member States have introduced job creation schemes directly connected with protection and improvement of the environment. In France about 1 200 jobs were generated between 1981 and 1983, while three programmes in Denmark provided a total of 10 600 to 11 800 new jobs between 1975 and 1983.

Employment is also created by other environmental programmes introduced specifically for their environmental as opposed to employment effects. These jobs are created in industries which provide environmental equipment or services, such as the construction and operation of pollution abatement systems, waste collection, disposal and recycling, sewage and water treatment and environmental research. Often these lead in turn to yet more jobs in associated sectors, arising from increased demand for raw materials, training administration, or other services. In France for example, three to four indirect jobs were created for every job directly created in water purification activities and in noise abatement measures one additional job was generated for every four directly created.

The importance of these sources of job creation in the Community can be illustrated by a number of examples. In the Netherlands some 70 000 new jobs were created in 1982 as a result of environmental programmes. In Germany an estimated 380 000 new jobs were generated by public and private spending in areas such as pollution abatement, waste collection and disposal, recycling, export of pollution control equipment, research and development and administration. These figures exclude the multiplier effect on associated sectors of the economy.

In waste disposal and treatment alone, it is estimated that Community directives adopted since 1975 have resulted in an increase of between 16 500 and 44 000 jobs (3 to 8%). In addition, between 16 500 and 22 000 further jobs were created indirectly. Predictions based on this data suggest that a further 50 500 to 123 000 jobs will be created in the waste sector (representing an increase of 10-25%) between now and 1995.

The European Commission plans a programme of demonstration projects over five years designed to explore all the possibilities of environment policies creating jobs. This will create a substantial body of experience and information for Member States to draw upon when considering their own programmes.

V — European Community action to protect the environment

Despite its relatively short lifespan and the constraints imposed by almost continuous economic recession, The European Community's environment policy has achieved notable results. In all, over 100 pieces of environmental legislation have been passed under the three four-year action programmes since 1973.

Given the scale of the task involved in protecting the environment and conserving natural resources and the limited human and financial resources at its disposal, the European Commission initially decided to concentrate on the most immediate threat — pollution. Although this focus has gradually changed from one of remedial action to preventive measures, most of the 100 or so directives, regulations and decisions adopted by the Community Member States are connected with efforts to control pollution.

What follows is by no means an exhaustive list of legislation. An inventory of the principal Community environment measures adopted to date is published at the end of this brochure.

Measures to reduce pollution and nuisances

Water pollution

Measures to curb pollution of fresh and sea water are aimed as far as possible at preventing pollution at source. They centre on a number of priority areas:

(i) The definition of quality objectives: a number of directives have been adopted establishing minimum levels of quality for fresh and sea water taking account of the various uses to which the water will be put. Directives have been approved setting minimum quality standards for surface water, drinking water, bathing water and water supporting fish life and shellfish. Systems for regular surveillance and monitoring of water resources have also been set up.

(ii) The protection of the aquatic environment from pollution by dangerous substances: in June 1976, the Council of Ministers adopted a framework directive

aimed at preventing pollution by products which, because of their toxicity, persistence and bio-accumulation, pose a special and lasting threat to the environment and human health. This has been followed up by directives limiting discharges of cadmium and mercury from industrial sources into Community waters. Further proposals for eliminating pollution by other hazardous products, including chromium and aldrin, endrin and dieldrin used in industrial sectors have been drawn up by the Commission.

(iii) The protection of the sea against oil pollution: following a number of alarming incidents of serious marine oil pollution in the seas around the Community — highlighted by the grounding of the tanker Amoco Cadiz off the coast of Brittany in 1978 — the Community has taken a series of measures to counter marine oil pollution.

Cleaning up the Brittany coast, following the breaking up of the supertanker Amoco Cadiz in March 1978.
(Photo Belga)

An EEC advisory committee on control and reduction of oil pollution at sea has been set up and an information system for preventing and combating oil spills established. The task of the committee, which is composed of experts from the 12 Member States, is to coordinate national and EEC anti-pollution policies. It makes recommendations to the European Commission on all problems related to the implementation of its programme against oil pollution and acts as a forum for the exchange of information between Member States. In May 1985, the committee's mandate was extended to cover pollution from other dangerous substances.

The EEC information system for control and reduction of oil pollution has four main components:

(a) a permanent inventory of staff, equipment and products for dealing with marine oil pollution;

(b) a catalogue containing comprehensive descriptions of all the different types of clean-up facilities listed in the inventory;

(c) a compendium of hydrocarbon properties, containing data on the main physical and chemical properties of hydrocarbons and how they react to specific types of treatment;

(d) a study of the different impacts of hydrocarbons on flora and fauna, depending on the characteristics of the oil and the area concerned.

The Commission has also proposed a Directive for drawing up an inter-related set of contingency plans at local, regional, national and Community level, to ensure that they are all compatible.

Unfortunately oil pollution is not confined to occasional sensational spills such as the Amoco Cadiz. The sea is often regarded as an open sewer for dumping waste oils from ships or aircraft or for fuel-tank cleaning operations. The Community has concentrated its efforts to curb these problems on action at a wider international level, and is signatory to a number of international conventions outlawing such dumping at sea (for details, see below under 'International action').

The Community recently proposed to fellow signatories of the Barcelona Convention on the protection of the Mediterranean against pollution that a network of floating reception centres be set up in the Mediterranean to provide tank cleaning and waste disposal facilities for ships. This proposal was accepted and is now in the process of being implemented.

(iv) Measures specific to certain industries: because of the nature of their production processes, some industries are responsible for greater or more harmful water pollution. The titanium dioxide industry is one example where Community

action is at hand to curb pollution. Measures are also envisaged to reduce potential water pollution by energy-producing industries through discharges of cooling water from power stations into the sea or rivers.

(v) The Community's environmental policy lays great stress on the need to protect natural resources, particularly fresh water, which accounts for only 1% of the Earth's surface, and to combat all forms of waste.

In addition to its anti-pollution measures, the European Commission has carried out a series of studies aimed at building up a clear picture of existing groundwater supplies and potential sources within the Community, which could help guarantee minimum supplies to regions where water is scarce. It has also assessed the water resources of each Member State in an average year and the estimated increase in demand for fresh water from the population and for use in agriculture, industry and energy production up to the year 2000.

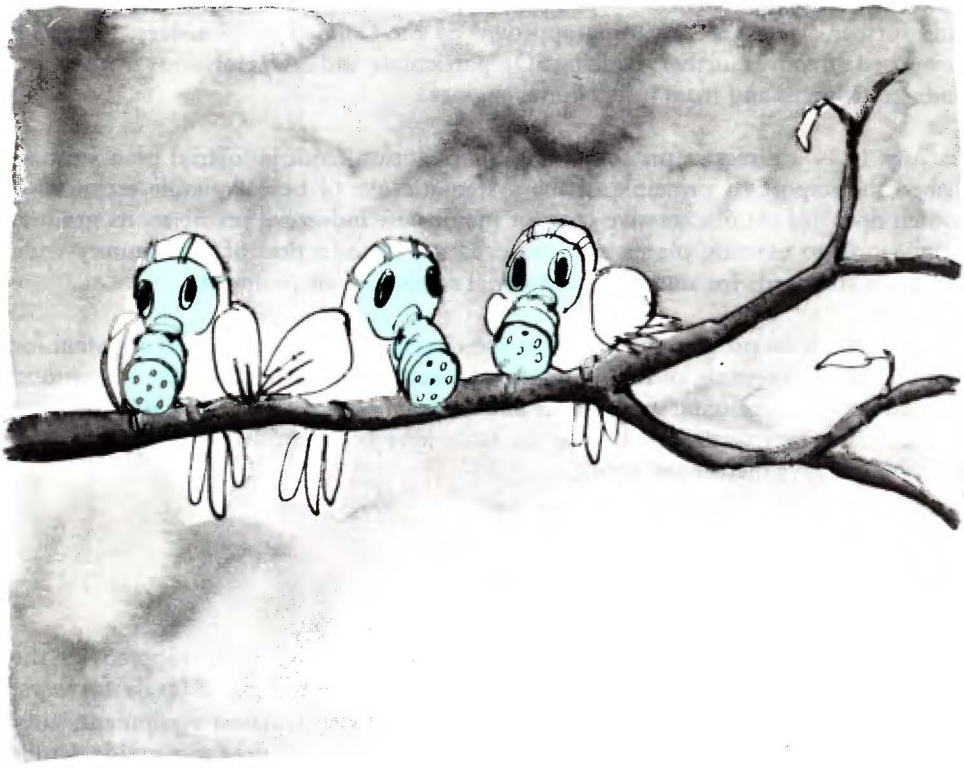
The Commission also carried out a study on ways and means of saving drinking water through reduced consumption and waste and has launched a publicity

campaign alerting the general public to the need to conserve water and showing how domestic consumption can be cut and has taken steps to encourage re-use and recycling of water in industry.

Air pollution

The first steps to curb air pollution were taken before the Community's environment policy proper had been implemented. In March 1970, measures were taken to reduce pollution caused by exhaust fumes from motor vehicles under the EEC's industrial action programme.

This has been followed up under the three environment action programmes to date by a series of directives aimed at cutting at source air pollution caused by both petrol and diesel powered motor vehicles (including farm tractors), by limiting the sulphur content of certain fuels and the lead and benzene content of petrol. In March 1985 an additional directive was adopted which foresees the general introduction of un-



leaded petrol throughout the Member States by October 1989 at the latest. New cars put onto the Community market must also conform to stricter emission standards from October 1988 on.

One of the more important achievements was the setting of compuitlsory air quality standards, to be respected everywhere in the Member States, for the ubiquitous pollutants sulphur dioxide, suspended particulate matter (SPM), lead and nitrogen dioxide. Three directives have been adopted to date: that of July 1980 setting down limit and guide values for sulphur dioxide and SPM in the atmosphere, another for lead in the ambient air in December 1982 and a third in March 1985 setting air quality standards for nitrogen dioxide.

The implementation of all three directives will bring about a substantial change in the pattern of emissions of these pollutants in the areas where the standards are still exceeded; to comply with the limit values set a gradual reduction of amounts of SO_2 and SPM being discharged into the atmosphere by industry and from other sources, of lead from petrol fueled engines, of NO_x from traffic, power plants and other combustion installations is necessary.

Another priority has been to reduce the levels of acid depositions in the Community and further actions are awaiting approval by the Council of Ministers, including proposed directives further reducing SO_2, particulate and NO_x emissions from major industry sources and from heavy diesel engines.

In July 1984 a directive on combating air pollution from industrial plants established the important principle of the systematic use of best available technology which does not entail excessive cost for major new industrial premises, its gradual application to existing plants and the eventual introduction of Community-wide emission standards for stationary industrial sources of air pollution.

To help check on progress being made, the Community set up in 1975 a system for the biological screening of the population to monitor body lead levels. A common procedure for exchanging surveillance and measuring data on levels of SO_2 and SPM in the atmosphere was established at the same time and extended in 1982 to include CO, NO_x, heavy metals and ozone.

Noise pollution

A series of directives designed to reduce noise levels has been adopted by the Council. These directives seek to set maximum permitted noise levels for cars, buses, heavy trucks, motorcycles, agricultural and construction equipment, subsonic aircraft and even lawnmowers. Manufacturers are required to provide details

Forests throughout the European Community and Scandinavia have been victims of acid rain and air pollution. Community environmental policy is now trying to get to grips with the causes of this pollution.
(Photo Belga)

of noise levels emitted by their products as part of the users' information and to make it easier for official inspections to be carried out.

A common method of measurement for noise emitted by construction equipment, such as air compressors and pneumatic drills, has also been adopted.

The Commission is paying particular attention to the levels of noise in the home and is preparing a set of proposals making it compulsory for manufacturers of domestic equipment, such as washing machines, vacuum cleaners, kitchen mixers and so on, to provide information on noise levels on product labels. The Commission and the Member States are also working together on a measurement programme of noise around airports, covering existing and anticipated future levels of traffic. The aim of the project is to make different national measures against noise compatible.

Chemicals

Many important pollutants are chemical substances which are the by-products, emissions or wastes from industrial products or production processes. The first generation of Community environmental legislation often focused on controlling specific substances, which were enumerated in a list annexed to the directives, for example, on water or air quality. But it was soon realized that very few of the about 120 000 chemicals on the European Community market had been even minimally tested for their risks to human health and the environment. Testing only a small percentage of these existing chemical substances would take years of effort and expense, and new chemicals appear on the market at a rate of 100-200 a year.

To be more effective and economical, a preventive approach had to be developed. This meant that risks and hazards had to be anticipated and controlled in advance, in a partnership between industry, the public and government.

This new generation of Community environmental legislation was inaugurated in 1979 with the adoption of the directive establishing a Community-wide notification system from new chemicals, based on the submission of a 'base set' of data and a risk assessment by the producer or importer to one Member State. This directive, known as the 'Sixth Amendment' created a 12-country system of interlocking procedures and obligations in which each Community Member State acts as the agent of its partners by admitting a new chemical onto the entire Community market. The 'base set' is a compilation of information about the physico-chemical characteristics of a new chemical, its potential health and environmental effects, its uses, quantities produced, proposed classification and labelling and an overall assessment of risks. Under certain conditions and at designated levels of production more detailed information must be provided that enables the Commission and Member States to evaluate more fully the potential risks posed by the chemical.

This information is transmitted to the Commission and all of the Member States; a summary is available to the public. Thus, the directive has created a comprehensive information system about risks and uses of new chemicals on the Community market that is regularly and automatically updated and expanded. In exchange, the chemical producers know that they have only one notification per manufacturer to submit; unlike for pharmaceuticals, once a chemical is properly notified it may be marketed freely throughout the entire common market.

The Sixth Amendment was followed in 1982 by the 'Seveso' Directive, which established a notification system covering emergency planning and response in the case of major industrial accidents. This directive also laid down for the first time obligations for the information and consultation of the public and neighbouring Member States in the development of emergency plans and after the occurrence of major accidents.

Firemen on the Isle of Wight, England, wear protective clothing when collecting containers of highly dangerous chemicals, several hundreds of which were washed ashore in 1979. Community directives now regulate the transport of toxic and dangerous wastes and prohibit their uncontrolled dumping or tipping.
(Photo Belga)

After the tragic release of poisonous gas in an industrial plant in Bhopal, India in 1984, the Seveso Directive became a worldwide model for the prevention and control of serious industrial accidents. Since Chernobyl, it has also been serving as a model for emergency response planning for nuclear installations.

These directives were the first in which the Commission decided to supervise implementation closely by convening the national competent authorities in Brussels several times a year to compare progress, discuss specific cases, and develop common, practical procedures and standards.

Of those chemicals already on the market before 1979, the Commission is currently developing a new, 'substances-oriented' control policy by collecting information about a small group of substances which are known to be dangerous. This new approach will enable the Community to develop comprehensive, effective and efficient procedures for testing, evaluating and controlling those dangerous chemicals which are already widely used by industry and distributed in the environment. It means that existing legislation focusing on solely the marketing and use of chemical products may have to be revised and made more comprehensive.

Already, new policies are being developed to link together existing Community legislation on cadmium, asbestos and lead and to combine them with other activities to monitor and control the release of these substances to the environment.

The Commission is continuing to work closely with the OECD on the implementation of past agreements on new chemicals, and to develop new agreements on existing chemicals.

In the case of chlorofluorocarbons, the Community is already a contracting party to the international Geneva Convention on the protection of the ozone layer. Successive Council decisions have set limits to the production of CFCs in the Community; work is progressing on the development of a CFC protocol to the Geneva Convention.

Measures to improve the environment and the quality of life

In its resolution of 17 May 1979, accompanying the adoption of the Community's second environmental action programme, the Council of Ministers called for greater emphasis to be laid on the preventive aspects of environmental policy and for particular attention to be given to the protection and rational management of land, the environment and natural resources. They stressed that preventive management of natural resources and the inclusion of qualitative considerations in the planning and organization of economic and social development are essential conditions for further growth.

This shift towards a preventive policy is a major step in reconciling environmental protection with economic growth.

The protection and rational management of land — Land in the Community is a very limited resource requiring careful husbandry. Land-use planning decisions taken today can determine the quality of the environment for some years to come.

In order to ensure that particularly sensitive land areas in the Community are not ill-used, the European Commission has developed an information system which, when completed, will enable decision-makers to have a picture of the state of the environment throughout the Community at any given time, to assess the condition of the environment over a period of time, to trace the impact of land-planning decisions on the environment and to spot signs of serious environmental degradation early enough to take remedial action.

In addition, studies have been carried out in particular zones already facing their own special problems, such as rural areas and forests (with a view to enhancing the good effects of agriculture and minimizing its harmful effects on the environment, particularly the problems involved in intensive farming and the use of pesticides); urban areas (with the aim of safeguarding the Community's rich architectural heritage, offsetting the problems of inner city areas and preserving the vitality of older, industrial areas); coastal areas (the Community has carried out case studies in Brittany and Puglia to investigate the problems involved in the practical implementation of a coastal planning policy. Particular attention will be paid to coastal erosion and the protection of beaches, especially from pollution and the impact of tourism); mountain areas (to try to ensure that development, for agriculture, tourism, energy or transport purposes, should not result in major degradation of the environment.

Protection of flora and fauna — The use to which land is put can also have an effect on the conservation of flora and fauna. The Community has therefore adopted an integrated approach designed to protect both endangered species and their habitats.

Since the start of the environmental policy, the Community has made substantial progress in this field. On 2 April 1979, EEC governments adopted a directive on the protection of birds, which lays down general protection rules, restricts the number of species that can be hunted and the means used to hunt them, limits trade in certain species and sets out general rules for protecting habitats.

In January 1981, in response to widespread public concern, the Community decided to ban the import of certain whale products (oils, bone, etc.) used for commercial purposes.

Protection of wildlife, like pollution control, is a field where wider international action can yield far more effective results than measures taken simply at national or even Community level. Recognizing this, the EEC Council urged the European Commission from the outset of the environmental policy to work closely with inter-

national bodies such as the OECD, the Council of Europe and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in the search for international conservation agreements.

The Community has become party to a number of international conventions designed to protect wildlife and their natural habitats including the 1975 Washington Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES), which restricts or prohibits trade in very rare species threatened with extinction; the Council of Europe Convention on the conservation of European wildlife and natural habitats and the International Convention on the conservation of marine flora and fauna in the Antarctic.

The Community has also taken part in negotiations on an international convention on the conservation of migratory species and is participating in efforts to find ways of protecting wetlands (marshes and bogland) throughout the world that are used by birds on their annual migration.

Waste management

In the wider field of waste management the Community has aimed to avoid or at least reduce the production of waste, the pollution it causes and the wastage of energy and raw materials it involves thereby cutting the Community's heavy dependence on imported energy and raw materials.

Every year about 2 000 million tonnes of wastes of all kinds are generated in the Member States. Industrial wastes account for 150-160 million tonnes, of which some 20-30 million tonnes are toxic and dangerous.

While most industrial wastes are either reprocessed or disposed of without harming the environment, toxic and dangerous wastes represent one of the largest environmental protection problems facing authorities at all levels from local to international, not so much because of the quantities involved but because of the particular risks connected with them — health hazards, risks of infection, fire, explosion or corrosion, threat to water supplies and so on). Facilities for the safe disposal of toxic and dangerous wastes in the Community are inadequate and provide suitable capacity for only 7-10 million tonnes. Proper treatment and safe disposal of toxic wastes is therefore one of the main challenges facing Community waste management policy.

That policy has three objectives:

(a) to reduce the quantity of un-recoverable waste;

(b) to recycle and reuse waste to the maximum extent for energy and raw materials;

(c) to dispose safely of any remaining non-recoverable wastes.

A number of directives have been adopted in line with these objectives:

(a) a general directive on waste (1975), requiring the Member States to designate the competent authorities to draw up plans for disposing of waste without endangering human health or the environment. Member States were also required to take appropriate steps to encourage the prevention, recycling, processing and reuse of waste and the extraction of raw materials and energy from it;

(b) a directive covering the collection and disposal of waste oils (1975), which are valuable both for regeneration and as fuel. Waste oils are, however, heavily polluted and can pose serious environmental problems unless properly handled. The Commission is currently considering further measures to tighten pollution controls on waste oil burners;

(c) a directive on toxic and dangerous wastes (1978), which established a list of toxic or dangerous substances or materials and laid down provisions prohibiting uncontrolled dumping and tipping and governing labelling, storage, treatment, disposal and transport. This has been supplemented by further directives tightening controls on the transport of dangerous wastes within the Community and on the export of toxic substances to third countries, particularly developing nations;

(d) directives have been adopted governing treatment and disposal of PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) and PCTs (polychlorinated terphenyls) and wastes from the titanium dioxide industry.

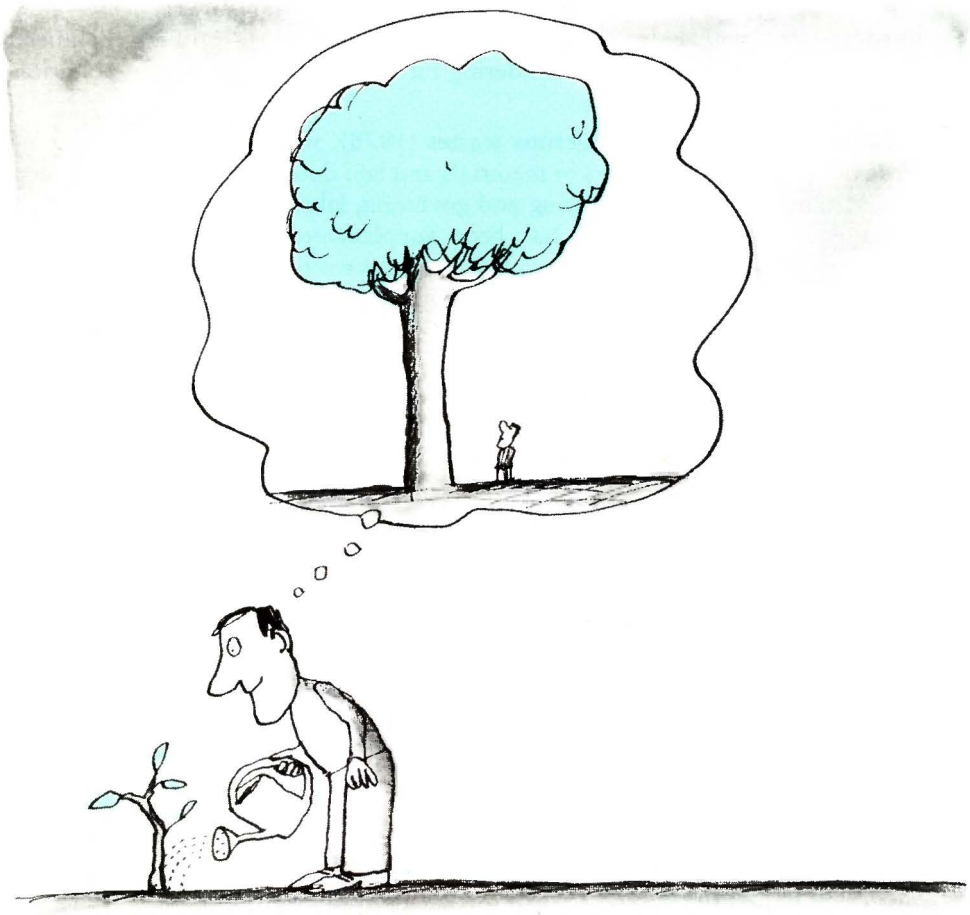
Measures have been taken to encourage reuse and recycling of waste in industry — glass and bottles in the drinks industry, for example — and in public administrations, particularly waste paper.

The Commission is carrying out a series of measures aimed at reducing the amount of waste generated, concentrating especially on the development of low polluting and waste-producing 'clean' technologies, for which it has organized and co-financed a number of pilot projects with industry and member governments. These projects cover, as of 1 March 1987, the following fields: surface treatments, leather industry, textile industry, cellulose and paper industries, mining and quarrying, chemical industry and the agri-food industry.

Research and development

The search for cleaner technologies, like the search for solutions to most environmental problems, requires a substantial research and development effort. The Community has had its own programme of environment R&D since 1973. Its main objectives are to provide a scientific basis for the implementation and further development of Community environment policy and to increase understanding of the environment.

The research programme is implemented through three distinct but mutually supportive approaches: contract research, direct action and concerted action.



In the contract research programme, current and long-term research needs of high priority for the Community are defined and research contracts awarded to scientific institutions in the Member States under the supervision and coordination of the European Commission. Direct research is carried out at the Community's Joint Research Centre at Ispra in Italy, while concerted action consists of research projects shared between Member States and non-Community countries.

The Community's research effort is broad and varied, reflecting the wide range of environmental issues and problems arising in the Community. It includes investigations into pollution sources and pathways and the ecological effects of various pollutants; the development of techniques to reduce or prevent pollution and waste; research to find a scientific basis for rational environmental protection and conservation measures; the effects on human health and the environment of exposure to heavy metals (such as cadmium, mercury, lead, nickel, chromium, arsenic and so on) and toxic substances.

General action: environmental impact assessment

One sure way to ensure better protection of the environment and more rational use of natural resources is to require all major planning decisions to be assessed in terms of their potential impact on the environment and natural resources.

Community governments have adopted a directive introducing a common system of environmental impact assessment into Member States' national planning procedures.

Under this directive, major public or private development projects in agriculture, industry or infrastructure (road or bridge-building for example) are subject to a form of environmental impact assessment prior to the work beginning. An applicant planning such a project is required to produce details of its potential polluting or other impacts on the various media (air, water, soil, noise and so on), its potential effects on wildlife and their habitats and its implications for the rational use of natural resources.

A decision whether to go ahead with the project and under what conditions approval is to be granted is then taken, balancing these environmental considerations against the economic, social and other benefits of the project in question.

Public education in environmental problems

Public concern about the state of the environment was one of the main factors that led the European Community to establish its own environmental policy. The need to keep the public, and especially the young, informed about the environment and constantly aware of the need to protect it, has always formed part of the Community's environment policy.

The European Commission has organized a network of pilot primary and secondary schools teaching environment studies as part of the curriculum. The aim of the project is to increase the number of schools teaching the topic at all ages and to improve methods and aids to teaching. To this end the Community has produced a number of brochures to assist teachers.

Training schemes have also been introduced for professional people, such as university staff, engineers and scientists, and conferences, seminars and scholarships on all aspects of environmental protection are held regularly.

On the broader front, the Commission provides financial and technical assistance to the European Environmental Bureau, the Brussels-based environment lobby group linking over 50 non-governmental environmental organizations in the 12 Member States. Commission officials regularly meet EEB members and participate in conferences and seminars organized by the Bureau.

Often, an important factor in determining the degree of public involvement and interest in environmental issues is its access to information held by the authorities concerned and the extent to which it feels it can genuinely take part in and influence decisions.

The Commission encourages complaints or reports from Community citizens about cases of environmental damage or neglect. These complaints are then investigated by Commission officials and action taken to remedy the situation. An example of such successful private action was the recent case of the rare white-fronted Greenland goose whose winter feeding ground on the island of Islay in Scotland was threatened by peat-cutting. The Commission ordered a halt to the cutting of the peat, used in the production of local malt whisky, while an alternative solution was found.

The desire to involve and inform the public about environmental issues was the reason that the Community Heads of State or Government designated 1987 the European Year of the Environment (EYE). The aim of EYE, marked by a series of public activities and events, ranging from trade fairs and exhibitions to nature conservation camps and pollution clean-up campaigns, is to bring into focus the serious

environmental problems facing Europe and the role of the public in helping to solve them.

EYE should help to stimulate Community citizens to give serious new thought to the environment and to underline the importance of environmental considerations being integrated properly into policy-making. The Commission hopes that EYE will not prove to be a one-off event, but a launching pad for a long-term effort to protect and improve the environment.

The international dimension

An increasing number of environmental problems, by their very nature, require international solutions. The Community's action programmes have called on the Commission, when drawing up EEC environmental legislation to cooperate closely with other international bodies, such as the OECD, the Council of Europe and the United Nations to ensure both that Community legislation keeps pace with wider international thinking and that the Community's voice is heard when agreements are being negotiated in international fora.

The Community has played a significant role in helping to find international solutions to environmental problems, particularly in the Mediterranean region, where it has a special interest.

In addition to the major wildlife conservation conventions listed above (see under 'Protection of flora and fauna') the Community is a party to the following conventions:

(i) the 1979 Geneva Convention on the prevention of long-range transboundary air pollution in Europe;

(ii) the 1976 Bonn Convention on the protection of the Rhine against pollution by chemicals;

(iii) the 1976 Barcelona Convention on the protection of the Mediterranean against pollution;

(iv) three protocols to the Barcelona Convention, concerning pollution from aircraft and ships, cooperation in cases of serious pollution by oil or other harmful substances and on pollution from land-based sources;

(v) the 1974 Paris Convention on the prevention of pollution from land-based sources;

(vi) the 1963 Berne Agreement setting up a commission for the prevention of Rhine pollution.

Given the transboundary nature of many environmental problems and the impact that certain national measures can have on the economies and trading relations with other nations, the environment has become a regular topic for discussion at bilateral level between the Community and a number of countries, as the United States of America, Canada, Japan, Switzerland, Austria, Sweden, Norway and Finland. It has also become a feature of the Community's relations with the developing world. The Lomé agreement, under which the Community, provides development aid and preferential trading relations to 66 Third World countries, includes a specific clause committing the partners to doing all in their power to prevent harming the environment.

The close link between development and protection of the environment and the recognition of the environment as an essential component of development makes it necessary for the Community to regard environmental protection as an integral part of its development policy. Among its priority aims are such matters as the conservation of tropical forests, halting desertification, water management and the introduction of agricultural systems and forms of energy use that are compatible with protection of the environment.

The Commission and the European Investment Bank are among the 11 signatories of the Declaration of Environmental Policies and Procedures relating to Economic Development, adopted in New York on 1 February 1980. The signatories are all international institutions involved in promoting development in the Third World and the declaration commits them to taking steps to ensure that such development is undertaken in ways that are compatible with environmental needs in the developing countries.

The signatories established a Committee of International Institutions on the Environment (Cidie), which reviews annually the implementation of the declaration.

Nuclear safety

The protection of man and the environment against possible hazards resulting from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy has been an objective of the Community since its creation, that is long before the establishment of Community environment policy. The treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) recognized nuclear energy as an essential resource for the development of future industrial activity. It also stressed the importance of developing this then still-new energy source in conditions of maximum public safety.

Over the years, the emphasis of the Community's nuclear research effort has shifted from the development of nuclear technology to the safety and safety-related aspects of this technology.

The main subjects covered by this research are:

(i) safety of nuclear reactors;

(ii) management and storage of radioactive wastes;

(iii) decommissioning of nuclear installations.

Aside from research, there are three other areas of Community action of particular importance for nuclear safety:

(i) a 1959 directive laying down basic safety standards for protection against ionizing radiation, which establishes uniform safety standards to protect the health of workers and the general public. This directive has been adapted on several occasions to reflect advances in scientific knowledge, most recently in July 1980;

(ii) in compliance with the Euratom Treaty, the Member States give the Commission general data on radioactive effluent releases from individual nuclear installations, before they become operational. After consulting a committee of experts, the Commission gives its opinion on the potential for contamination of another Member State resulting from such releases. The Commission may also recommend measures to be taken to avoid possible contamination;

(iii) the Euratom Treaty also requires Member States 'to establish the facilities necessary to carry out continuous monitoring of the level of radioactivity of the air, water and soil and to assure compliance with the basic standards'. The Commission receives these data and is thus in a position to evaluate the level of radiation exposure of the population.

Although measures to ensure nuclear safety do not fall under the Community's environment action programmes,their implementation is overseen by a coordinating committee chaired by the Commission's Directorate for Environment, Consumer Protection and Nuclear Safety, thus assuring close liaison with Community environment policy.

Following the serious accident at the Chernobyl nuclear plant in the Soviet Union, the Commission set up a task force to review the Community's preparedness and responses in case of a nuclear accident in one of the Member States.

VI — The future: the Community's fourth environment action programme

As will have become clear from preceeding chapters, the European Community has made progress in protecting and conserving Europe's environment. There is some environmental legislation on the statute books and a general recognition, both on the part of the authorities and the public at large, of the need to maintain the effort.

It is now no longer seriously contested that the needs of the environment and those of the economy are inextricably linked and that an effective environment policy can have positive effects on economic growth and job creation. It is also recognized that the central role that environment policy has to play in the future economic wellbeing of the Community, demands that environmental considerations be built into all levels of Community policy-making.

Against this backdrop, the European Commission feels that the time is ripe for consolidation of the ground so far taken, rather than any major new offensive. Its fourth environment action programme, due to run from 1987 to the end of 1992, therefore concentrates on ensuring full and effective implementation of existing Community legislation and on yet deeper integration of environmental requirements in all policy areas.

Implementation of Community legislation

A good environment policy which is not implemented is literally not worth the paper it is printed on. Likewise, it is questionable whether ambitious new policy plans should be drawn up if existing programmes and policies are not put into effect.

The Community is the only international organization which has the power to adopt binding, enforceable legislation, and where a special court, the European Court of Justice, is charged with ensuring that this legislation is respected. Procedures have been evolved to ensure the effective implementation of the specific Community environment legislation that has been adopted since 1975. Enforcement and implementation of existing Community environment legislation will be a priority for the European Commission under the fourth action programme.

It is not widely known that every individual Community citizen has the right to complain to the Commission if he considers that a particular national, regional or local measure infringes Community law. Upon receiving such a complaint, the Commission carries out an inquiry to ascertain the facts, contacting government, non-government organizations and other interested parties and using studies and research findings. This procedure is free of charge to the complainant, whose identity is kept secret during the investigation. Where the Commission concludes that Community law has been breached, it initiates infringement proceedings under Article 169 of the Treaty of Rome against the Member State in question. The final decision on whether an infringement exists rests with the Court of Justice.

Such a procedure, which is time- and energy-consuming, cannot ensure full and complete enforcement of Community environment legislation. Non-governmental organizations and the general public have a crucial role to play as 'watchdogs' of the environment. Individuals and organizations can bring cases to the attention of local, regional or national authorities, start proceedings themselves at the appropriate level, or alert public opinion. In order to allow this watchdog function to be pro-

perly exercised, improvements will undoubtedly be necessary, such as better dispute settlement procedures, improved judicial and quasi-judicial recourse for individuals and organizations in environment questions, improved knowledge about the state of the environment, and so on. However, it is a fact that complete and effective implementation of existing Community environment legislation by all Member States would lead to a substantial improvement in the quality of the environment, contribute to better integration of national environment policies and strengthen the cohesion of the Community.

The integration of environment considerations in other policies

Just as effective implementation of existing and new environmental protection legislation is crucial to the success of efforts to safeguard Europe's environment, the integration of environmental considerations in other areas of Community activity is essential, since so many Community policies have direct and indirect harmful effects on the environment.

The Community's common agricultural policy, for example, which was set up with the intention of safeguarding Europe's food sources and supplying them to consumers at reasonable prices, while at the same time maintaining farmers' incomes, has resulted in a fundamental change in the traditional shape and character of the countryside. By guaranteeing farmers fixed prices for their produce, the CAP has encouraged a level of agricultural production that ignores the level of consumer demand. This in turn has led to the creation of the by-now-infamous beef and butter mountains and the wine lake. Guaranteed prices regardless of the market rules of supply and demand have also encouraged farmers to maximize production by exploiting intensive or 'industrial' farming techniques, aided by increased reliance on pesticides and fertilizers.

This wider use of chemicals in agriculture has increased the threat of pollution to groundwater sources. The tendency to turn as much land as possible over to crops has led to the uprooting of trees and hedgerows, not only destroying already shrinking wildlife habitats but also the variety and character of the rural landscape.

Of course not all agriculture involves degradation of the environment. But the common agricultural policy should do more to create a more balanced framework in which agriculture respects the environment and conserves landscapes and wildlife, while at the same time safeguarding food supplies and supporting farm incomes.

While the CAP is the only genuine European policy, there are many other areas where the Community has significant coordinating and directing responsibilities.

Community action in the industrial sector, be it steelmaking, coal-mining, shipbuilding, chemicals, automobiles or whatever, has tended to concentrate on economic concerns, largely regarding environmental considerations as an adjunct to, rather than an integral part of, policy-making. Widespread recession in recent years and increased competition from third countries has helped to foster this attitude.

While substantial progress has been made in terms of pollution control and prevention and the limited introduction of limited environmental impact assessment, industry's choices of products and production processes should themselves be influenced by environmental considerations.

Similarly, in the transport sector, where the Community is seeking to develop a common policy, the integration of environmental considerations in the planning and construction of infrastructure (roads, tunnels, bridges and so on) is beginning to be regarded as an essential complement to existing controls on pollution and measures to prevent potentially hazardous accidents during the transport of oil, chemicals and other dangerous substances.

Energy production is heavily dependent on the use of fossil fuels and energy policy is therefore inevitably concerned with atmospheric pollution. Environmental requirements in turn affect energy costs and the competitive position as between different energy sources.The balanced pursuit of environment and energy policy objectives is therefore of special importance. Technologies already exist that can achieve significant reductions in polluting emissions from fossil fuel-fired power stations at reasonable costs. Further, energy conservation and the development of alternatives to fossil fuels will help improve air quality. Actions taken in the field of energy need therefore to be seen from an environmental as well as economic standpoint. A degree of integration has already been achieved but there may be real problems ahead, particularly if there is a revival of economic growth.

This need to incorporate an environmental dimension into the planning and development stages of decision-making extends equally to regional and social, consumer and trade and development policies.

There are, however, serious obstacles to achieving this objective of closer integration. Not least among these, is the low priority that has until now been given to environment policy in the Community's budget. Only 0.05% of the annual budget of 35 000 million ECU (in 1986) is spent on the environment, compared with about 65% on agriculture. This low level of spending obviously seriously limits the human and financial resources available to the Commission to draw up new environment initiatives and implement existing policy.

Furthermore, agriculture and industry are backed by long-standing experienced and influential pressure groups, which are highly suspicious of what they regard as further restrictions on their normal activities. These interest groups are reflected in Community governments, some of which have strong agricultural sectors or particular industries they wish to protect, and within the different Directorates-General in the European Commission.

This tendency by member governments to protect what are perceived to be vital national interests has in the past been compounded by the Community's unanimous voting system, which requires that agreement on major policy changes and new initiatives is approved by all 12 Member States. Inevitably, if any advance is to be made, compromises must be worked out between the Twelve. Often this has led to a 'lowest common denominator' approach to decision-making, where unanimity is only reached by whittling away elements of proposed legislation that individual Member States object to or by watering down the proposal as a whole.

Although a shift to majority voting is now under way, individual Member States will still be able to plead vital national interest to block legislation which they find unacceptable.

What is needed almost more than new legislation, therefore, is a fundamental change of attitude among those in authority: a shift away from seeing environmental policy as marginal and a recognition that only through protection of the environment and the rational husbanding of natural resources can long-term economic growth be assured.

Priority actions

Given the limited human and financial resources at its disposal, the Commission is always forced to focus its attention on a limited number of areas it regards as priorities. In selecting these priorities, the Commission lays particular stress on measures that lead to an improvement in the operation of the common European market in goods and services or to fairer competition between the Member States. The spread of pollution across national boundaries, controls on transfrontier transport of dangerous substances and the environmental effects of other Community policies are also issues requiring Community-level action, as are environmental problems that are common to many or most Member States.

The Commission has outlined a series of priorities for action under the new fourth environment action programme. It should be stressed, however, that given the constraints mentioned above, these should be regarded as priorities more for serious

discussion between the Member States, rather than as a firm list of legislative intentions. The selected priority areas are:

Air pollution

The Community is currently working out a longer-term strategy to reduce air pollution both within the Community and outside its boundaries. Among the main aims of this strategy are the identification of outdoor and indoor air pollutants which are currently or potentially of concern to public health and the environment; to set and implement EEC-wide goals for substantial reductions in total emissions of pollution from all sources into the air; in the longer term to reduce ambient air concentrations of the most important pollutants down to levels considered acceptable for the protection of the most sensitive ecosystems.

The Community will also need to set standards for air pollution from major industrial plants not covered by its existing directive, in particular for nuclear installations and plants burning fuel oil and solid fuels.

Further measures will also be proposed for reducing air pollution from forms of transport not covered by existing EEC legislation and setting air quality standards for certain pollutants such as photochemical oxidants.

Water pollution

The increasing priority given to the prevention of marine pollution under the preceeding action programmes will continue, with the main objectives being the implementation of international conventions to which the Commission is a contracting party; the implementation of a strategic action plan for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea; the reduction of land-based emissions of pollutants into the sea through waste and from the atmosphere; the implementation of the Community information system for dealing with harmful substances spilled at sea.

New action undertaken by the Commission to protect the Community's fresh water supplies will include rules on the spreading or discharge of livestock effluents likely to cause water pollution; control and reduction of water pollution resulting from the use of fertilizers; rules governing the use of pesticides in agriculture so as to limit water pollution; the definition of minimum standards to be achieved in the long term in all Community waters.

Chemicals

Continuing priorities will be the implementation of the new chemicals notification system and the classification and labelling of new and existing chemicals. A major

Too late. This guillemot is dying, its plumage impregnated with oil. But Community legislation on the prevention of sea pollution will save hundreds of thousands — not only of guillemots, but also of other sea birds, fish and marine plants.
(Photo Belga)

new proposal will be the integrated regulation of dangerous chemicals, requiring a review of the adequacy of existing Community legislation. A directive will also be proposed setting out a comprehensive structure for risk assessment and regulation of chemicals already on the market.

The crucial question of the export of dangerous industrial processes to non-EEC countries remains a high priority and the Community should develop legislation governing this field.

Biotechnology

The European Community has an obvious interest in this rapidly developing field. The proliferation of new industries using modern techniques of genetic manipulation means that the potential environmental impacts of products and production processes could multiply quickly if appropriate precautions were not taken.

A comprehensive approach to the protection of the environment from possible risks arising from genetically manipulated products may therefore be needed. This would cover everything connected with the industry from control of production processes, uses and sites, to waste management, accident prevention and the effects of the products on humans, wildlife and the ecosystem.

In the first instance, however, the Commission will draw up a directive establishing a notification system for the industrial and environmental use of genetically-modified organisms. Because no Member State or indeed any other country has legislation in this field as yet, the Community has an opportunity to develop its own rules and to act as a model for other countries.

Noise

The Community has introduced a series of measures to reduce noise from various products (see above). The question now arises whether the Community should move further and faster towards introducing an anti-noise policy as outlined in the second environment action programme, but not implemented because of staff shortages in the Commission.

As a first step, the Commission could consider defining quality objectives of guidelines for noise, given the considerable public concern about noise levels.

As far as noise from individual products is concerned, the Commission may propose regulations on motorcycle silencer replacements and the possible inclusion of noise tests in government vehicle inspections (contrôle technique, MOT tests).

A Community approach to noise-related landing charges at airports (something entirely consistent with the polluter pays principle) might also be advocated to help curb aircraft noise.

In general, the Community should aim at optimum noise levels for specific products. Member States could be guided towards adopting policies which charge, or otherwise discourage, noisy products in favour of quieter ones, thus putting pressure on manufacturers to develop less noisy articles.

Conservation of nature and natural resources

The time is now ripe for the Community to make a major new effort in the field of nature conservation. What is required is a comprehensive framework ensuring that positive measures are taken throughout the Community to protect all forms of wildlife and their habitats. Such measures should be in line with the three central

aims of the World Conservation Strategy, namely the maintenance of essential ecological processes and life support systems, the preservation of genetic diversity and the sustainable use of species and ecosystems.

Urgent action is needed to protect endangered plants and species and a greater effort to implement the Berne Convention on the protection of such species in the Member States would constitute an important step in the right direction.

Protection of the soil

Given the variety of uses to which the soil is put and the variety of threats it therefore faces, a global approach to soil protection is necessary.

This should be achieved by reinforcing the mechanisms and structures for coordination to ensure that soil protection is more effectively taken into account in development policies; by launching initiatives linked to the three principle causes of soil degradation — contamination, physical degradation and misuse; by developing a policy that takes account of the land-use implications of all Community policies and introducing legal and regulatory instruments for analysis, economic evaluation, planning and control.

This comprehensive approach to soil protection should also include:

(i) measures to encourage less intensive livestock production, to reduce the scale of use of agricultural chemicals, proper management of agricultural wastes and a reduction in damage caused by agriculture to the ecological infrastructure;

(ii) measures to prevent soil erosion and rapid run-off of water, including the mapping of rapidly erodable soils in the Community;

(iii) measures to reduce depositions of airborne pollutants on land;

(iv) measures to protect groundwater supplies;

(v) waste management measures aimed at identifying and cleaning up polluted waste disposal sites and reducing the threat to soil from waste disposal practices;

(vi) the recovery and reuse of derelict or contaminated land.

Waste management

Further action will be taken to develop 'clean technologies' which, coupled with the creation of the right market conditions for a more rational approach to waste management, would lead to economic and employment gains and a considerable reduction in import dependence, as well as to a reduction in pollution.

Work will also be undertaken to define criteria for environmentally sound products, that is products that give rise to little or no waste.

The Commission will also continue its promotion of research and demonstration projects on waste recycling and develop programmes of information exchange and consumer information to encourage recycling.

Urban areas and coastal zones

Urban areas in all Member States have experienced rapid and major changes over the past decade and will continue to do so for the forseeable future. In some countries rapid urbanization is a result of migration to towns from the countryside and the growth of the urban population is now resulting in poor housing, an imbalance between labour supply and demand, inadequate or overloaded urban infrastructure and services and deteriorating environmental quality. Elsewhere urbanization has given way to decentralization with people moving out of crowded city centres to the suburbs.

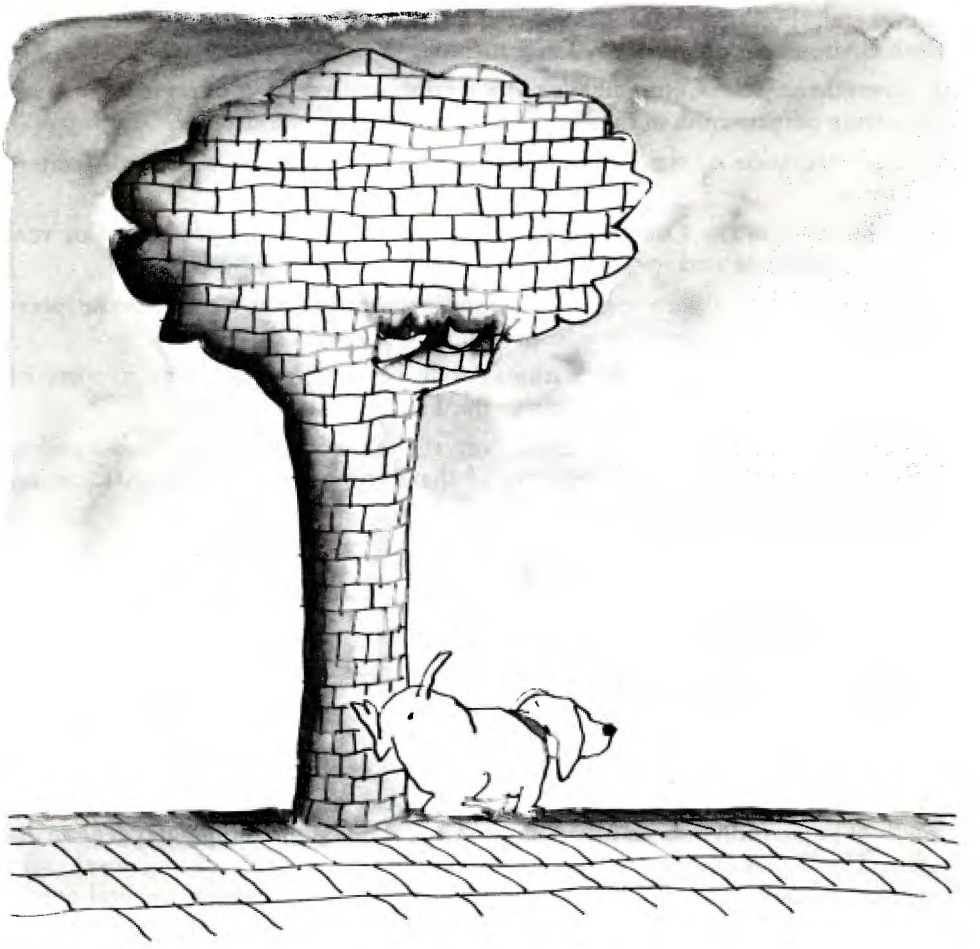
Many European cities are now in a substantially worse condition than they were 10 years ago. Urban environmental problems must assume a higher priority in the Community. Some initiatives are already under way, in Belfast and Naples for example, which concentrate mainly on economic development and provision of infrastructure.

These programmes could be extended to other needy urban areas and should be complemented by comprehensive environmental programmes involving reclamation of derelict or contaminated land, the creation of parks and other landscaped areas, the treatment of eyesores and restoration of older buildings.

Such clean up operations are however expensive. The Commission has estimated that some 1 000 million ECU a year would be required from public and private sources over a 12-year period to clean up land contaminated by industrial activities before it could be recycled for other uses. The Community should therefore concentrate on developing new technologies and more cost-effective methods of cleaning up urban areas, as well as on cleaner preventive technologies.

The Commission intends to prepare a report examining how the public and private sectors and other interested parties can work together to rehabilitate urban areas and sustain their economic development.

Work carried out by the Community under its previous environment action programmes has helped to identify specific problems in certain coastal areas that require urgent solutions and the Commission is currently developing a European



Coastal Charter along with a series of measures to combat degradation of the Community's coastal regions.

Action at international level

Although the international dimension of the Community's environment activities has been well-developed in recent years, the Member States and the Commission both feel that special emphasis must be put on the importance of international moves to protect the environment.

To that end, the Commission has selected a series of priorities for action under the fourth environment programme. These include:

(i) strengthening the Community's participation in protection of regional seas involving participation in the Helsinki and Oslo Conventions;

(ii) implementation of the Genoa declaration on the protection of the Mediterranean;

(iii) taking part in the Council of Europe Convention for the protection of vertebrate animals used for experimental and other scientific purposes;

(iv) adopting a Community regulation requiring Member States to ratify the international agreements on the transport of dangerous goods;

(v) to help to develop an international code of conduct governing exports of dangerous chemicals, particularly to the Third World;

(vi) further strengthening cooperation on the environment with non-member countries particularly the members of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), Japan and the USA.

Cooperation with developing countries

The Third World faces some of the world's most challenging and dangerous environmental problems — desertification, tropical deforestation, the explosive growth of population in both urban and rural areas; loss of wildlife and genetic diversity. The Community intends to continue playing its part in helping developing countries combat these problems by taking more account of environmental considerations under its Lomé III trade and aid agreement with 66 nations in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific.

Particular attention has to be paid in the Community's development and cooperation programmes to the importance of tropical forests, which are one of the world's most valuable natural resources. They are essential sources of food, fuel, shelter, medicines and many other products as well as sustaining people and their environments by protecting soil and water resources and providing a habitat for some 50% of the world's animal and plant species.

Yet destruction of these forests is taking place at an alarming rate. Every year more than 11 million hectares — an area larger than Austria — is lost. Scientists estimate that 40% of the biologically rich tropical moist forests have been cleared or degraded already and in many developing countries they will all but disappear in two or three decades if present trends continue.

The Community's contribution to the conservation of tropical forests should include:

(i) participation in the International Tropical Timber Agreement,

(ii) European Investment Bank and other Community financing for conservation measures;

(iii) examination of Member States' trade policies and their effect on tropical forest conservation;

(iv) the promotion of a voluntary code of conduct among timber companies based in the Community which would seek to ensure that imports of tropical hardwoods only come from concessions that include ecologically positive management policies — including the acceptance of obligations to renew and replant and to restore damaged land and landscapes.

The Commission also intends to make proposals for necessary coordination of Member States' individual development policies, including the part to be played by Member States' representatives on key financing institutions such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, to ensure that the Community countries contribute to decision-making on aid programmes in a more 'environmentally conscious' way.

VII — Conclusion

The future health of the environment in Europe will depend largely on the degree to which environmental considerations are genuinely integrated in future decisions on the planning and development of all aspects of the Community's economic and social life.

With its new environment action programme, the Commission has sought to establish this principle. There are however still obstacles to achieving this objective:

(i) environmental policy is still regarded in some quarters as a 'marginal' policy, that can be pursued cyclically, that is allowed to develop in times of economic prosperity but a prime target for cuts during recession when resources become limited;

(ii) partly as a result of this attitude, the policy suffers from a shortage of financial resources and manpower, which has led to strict limitations being placed on its scope. This is reflected in the fact that while the action programmes outline an ambitious and far-reaching range of measures, staff and financial shortages have allowed only a narrow selection of areas to be dealt with;

(iii) like other EEC policies, environmental policy has to work with the need to find compromise between 12 Member States, whose priorities and depth of commitment often vary widely. This tends to lead to a lowest common denominator approach, with legislation moving at the pace of the 'slowest' member government;

(iv) a similar compromise has to be found within the Commission itself, where different departments also have different priorities. Officials responsible for Community agriculture or industry policies may see efforts to protect the countryside and wildlife habitats or to impose stricter pollution requirements as a threat to the success of their own policies.

The Commission itself recognizes these dilemmas and has sought to isolate priority areas for action. It is also trying to evolve an environment policy that is more flexible and responsive to the differing circumstances in different regions of the Community, where the environment may be less seriously at risk or where the roots of economic growth need to be nurtured with special care.

The problem of environmental protection is, as has been shown, not a new problem that concerns our generation alone. But it must be recognized that the pace at which mankind has developed industrially and technologically over the past 50 years and

the basis that this development has laid for even faster future growth, demand that we take measures now to safeguard the environment for future generations.

This booklet has sought to demonstrate the interdependence of the economy and the environment. That interdependence requires that action be taken to safeguard natural resources and the environment since they provide the very soil in which the roots of future growth take root. If we neglect the demands of conservation, we risk exhausting those resources or polluting them to such an extent that future growth is stifled.

In truth, there is not a choice between environmental protection and economic growth. The only choice this generation faces is one of recognizing and facing up to the responsibility that all of us share — namely to pass onto our children a world fit to live in and fit to enjoy.

The most important environmental legislation and policy decisions adopted by the European Community

1. Council Regulation (EEC) No 1872/84 of 28 June 1984 on action by the Community relating to the environment.
   OJ L 176, 1984, p. 1.

2. Council Decision 85/338/EEC of 27 June 1985 on the adoption of the Commission work programme concerning an experimental project for gathering, coordinating and ensuring the consistency of information on the state of the environment and natural resources in the Community (Corine).
   OJ L 176, 1985, p. 14.

3. Council Directive 85/337/EEC of 27 June 1985 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment.
   OJ L 175, 1985, p. 40.

4. Declaration of the Council of the European Communities and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting in the Council of 22 November 1973 on the programme of action of the European Communities on the environment.
   OJ C 112, 1973, p. 1.

5. Resolution of the Council of the European Communities and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council of 17 May 1977 on the continuation and implementation of a European Community policy and action programme on the environment.
   OJ C 139, 1977, p. 1.

6. Resolution of the Council of the European Communities and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 7 February 1983 on the continuation and implementation of a European Community policy and action programme on the environment (1982-86).
   OJ C 46, 1983, p. 1.

7. Council resolution of 6 March 1986 on an action programme for the European Year of the Environment (1987).
   OJ C 63, 1986, p. 1.

8. Agreement of 5 March 1973 on information for the Commission and for the Member States with a view to possible harmonization throughout the Communities of urgent measures concerning the protection of the environment.
   OJ C 9, 1973, p. 1.

9. Agreement of 15 July 1974 supplementing the Agreement of 5 March 1973.
OJ C 86, 1974, p. 2.

10. Council Directive 70/220/EEC of 20 March 1970 on air pollution by gases from engines of motor vehicles.
OJ L 76, 1970, p. 1; last amended by Directive 83/351/EEC, OJ L 197, 1983, p. 1.

11. Council Directive 75/716/EEC of 24 November 1975 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the sulphur content of certain liquid fuels.
OJ L 307, 1975, p. 22.

12. Council Directive 80/779/EEC of 15 July 1980 on air quality limit values and guide values for sulphur dioxide and suspended particulates.
OJ L 229, 1980, p. 30.

13. Council Directive 82/884/EEC of 3 December 1982 on a limit value for lead in the air.
OJ L 378, 1982, p. 15.

14. Council Directive 84/360/EEC of 28 June 1984 on the combating of air pollution from industrial plants.
OJ L 188, 1984, p. 20.

15. Council Directive 85/203/EEC of 7 March 1985 on air quality standards for nitrogen dioxide.
OJ L 87, 1985, p. 1.

16. Council Directive 85/210/EEC of 20 March 1985 on the approximation of the laws of Member States concerning the lead content of petrol.
OJ, L 96, 1985, p. 25.

17. Council Directive 76/769/EEC of 27 July 1976 on the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States relating to restrictions on the marketing and use of certain dangerous substances and preparations.
OJ L 262, 1976, p. 201; last amended by Council Directive 85/610/EEC of 20 December 1985, OJ L 375, 1985, p. 1.

18. Council Directive 79/831/EEC of 18 September 1979 amending for the sixth time Directive 67/548/EEC on the classification, packaging and labelling of dangerous substances.
OJ L 259, 1979, p. 10.

19. Council Directive 82/501/EEC of 24 June 1982 on the major-accident hazards of certain industrial activities.
OJ L 230, 1982, p. 1.

20. Council Directive 75/440/EEC of 16 June 1975 concerning the quality required of surface water intended for the abstraction of drinking water in the Member States.
OJ L 194, 1975, p. 26.

21. Council Directive 76/160/EEC of 8 December 1975 concerning the quality of bathing water.
OJ L 31, 1976, p. 1.

22. Council Directive 76/464/EEC of 4 May 1976 on pollution caused by certain dangerous substances discharged into the aquatic environment of the Community.
OJ L 129, 1976, p. 23.

23. Council Directive 80/68/EEC of 17 December 1979 on the protection of groundwater against pollution caused by certain dangerous substances.
OJ L 20, 1980, p. 43.

24. Council Directive 80/778/EEC of 15 July 1980 relating to the quality of water intended for human consumption.
OJ L 229, 1980, p. 11.

25. Council Directive 82/176/EEC of 22 March 1982 on limit values and quality objectives for mercury discharges by the chlor-alkali electrolysis industry.
OJ L 81, 1982, p. 29.

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OJ L 291, 1983, p. 1.

27. Council Directive 84/156/EEC of 8 March 1984 on limit values and quality objectives for mercury discharges by sectors other than the chlor-alkali electrolysis industry.
OJ L 74, 1984, p. 49.

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OJ L 274, 1984, p. 11.

29. Council Directive 86/280/EEC of 12 June 1986 on limit values and quality objectives for discharges of certain dangerous substances included in List I of the Annex to Directive 76/464/EEC.
OJ L 181, 1986, p. 16.

30. Council Directive 70/157/EEC of 6 February 1970 on the permissible sound level and the exhaust system of motor vehicles.
OJ L 42, 1970, p. 16; last amended by Directive 84/424/EEC, OJ L 238, 1984, p. 31.

31. Council Directive 80/51/EEC of 20 December 1979 on the limitation of noise emissions from subsonic aircraft.
OJ L 18, 1980, p. 26.

32. Council Directive 84/538/EEC of 17 September 1984 on the permissible sound power level of lawnmowers.
OJ L 300, 1984, p. 171.

33. Council Directive 75/439/EEC of 16 June 1975 on the disposal of waste oils.
OJ L 194, 1975, p. 23.

34. Council Directive 75/442/EEC of 15 July 1975 on waste.
OJ L 194, 1975, p. 39.

35. Council Directive 76/403/EEC of 6 April 1976 on the disposal of polychlorinated biphenyls and polychlorinated terphenyls.
OJ L 108, 1976, p. 41.

36. Council Directive 78/176/EEC of 20 February 1978 on waste from the titanium dioxide industry.
OJ L 54, 1978, p. 19.

37. Council Directive 78/319/EEC of 20 March 1978 on toxic and dangerous waste.
OJ L 84, 1978, p. 43.

38. Council Directive 84/631/EEC of 6 December 1984 on the supervision and control within the European Community of the transfrontier shipment of hazardous waste.
OJ L 326, 1984, p. 31.

39. Council Directive 85/339/EEC of 27 June 1985 on containers of liquids for human consumption.
OJ L 176, 1985, p. 18.

40. Council Directive 86/278/EEC of 12 June 1986 on the protection of the environment, and in particular of the soil, when sewage sludge is used in agriculture.
OJ L 181, 1986, p. 6.

41. Council Directive 79/409/EEC of 2 April 1979 on the conservation of wild birds.
OJ L 103, 1979, p. 1.

42. Council Regulation (EEC) No 3626/82 of 3 December 1982 on the implementation in the Community of the Convention on international trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora.
OJ L 384, 1982, p. 1.

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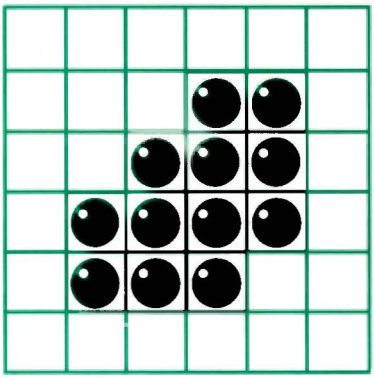
EN

Salmon and other fish have reappeared in the Thames. In the Federal Republic of Germany dust emissions from industrial plants have been cut by 65% in 10 years. Historic monuments which once seemed doomed have been restored to pristine whiteness.

Where there is a will and a way, the fight to protect and safeguard our environment can be effective.

For too long we believed that the water we drink and the air we breathe would effortlessly be ours for ever.



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