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Report

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Energy and Research

on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council (Doc. 264/76) for a decision reviewing the energy research and development programme adopted by the Council's decision of 22 August 1975

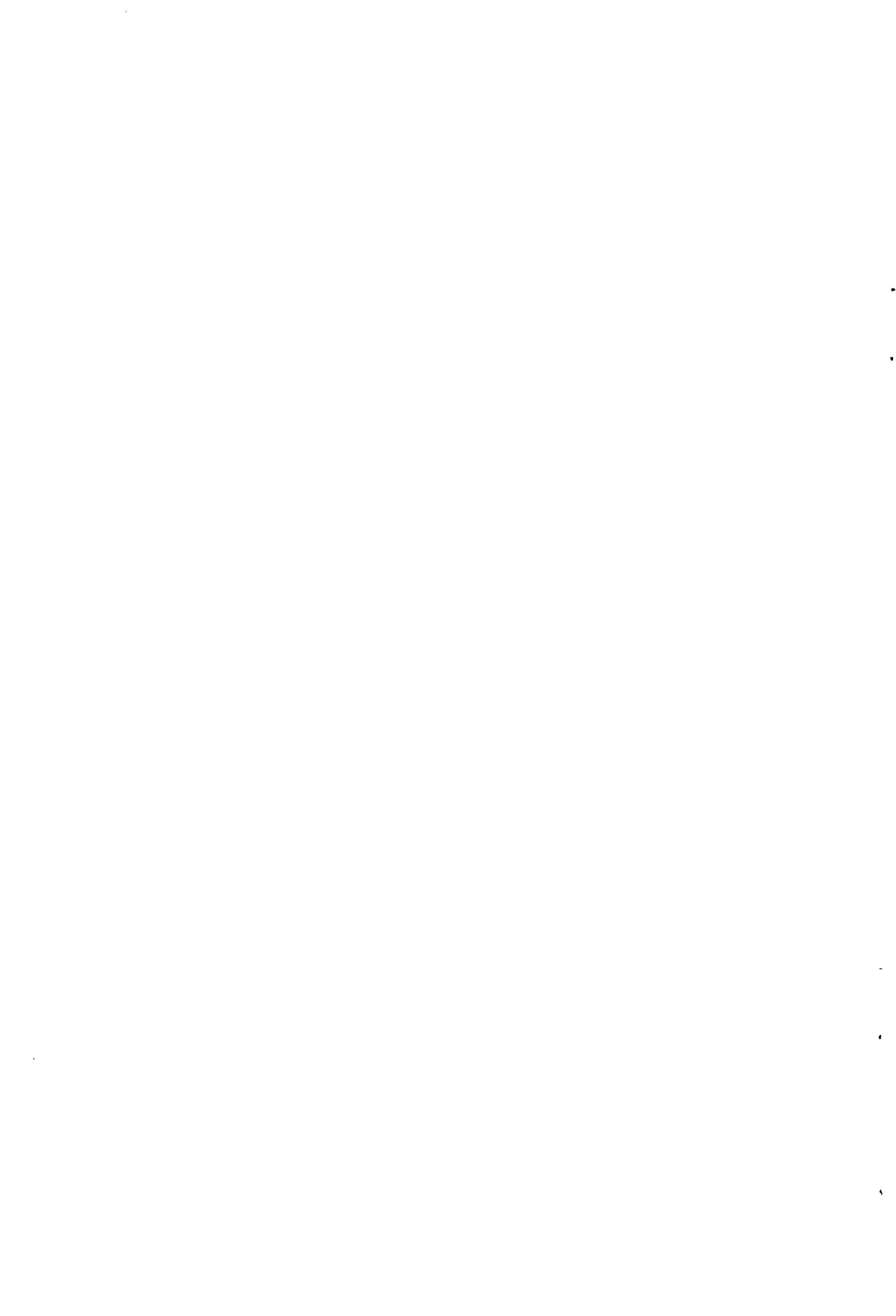
Rapporteur: Mr J.-F. PINTAT

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English Edition



By letter of 12 August 1976 the President of the Council of the European Communities requested the European Parliament, pursuant to Article 235 of the EEC Treaty, to deliver an opinion on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council for a decision reviewing the energy research and development programme adopted by the Council's decision of 22 August 1975.

The President of the European Parliament referred this proposal to the Committee on Energy and Research as the committee responsible and to the Committee on Budgets for its opinion.

On 10 September 1976 the Committee on Energy appointed Mr Pintat rapporteur.

It considered this proposal at its meeting of 29 September 1976.

At its meeting of 3 November 1976 the committee unanimously adopted the motion for a resolution and the explanatory statement.

Present: Mr Springorum, chairman; Mr Flämig, vice-chairman; Mr Leonardi, vice-chairman; Mr Pintat, rapporteur; Mr Adams (deputizing for Mr Lautenschlager), Lord Bessborough, Mr de Broglie, Mr Burgbacher, Mr Covelli, Mr Delmotte (deputizing for Mr van der Hek), Mr Ellis, Mr van der Gun (deputizing for Mr Fioret), Mr Hougardy, Mr Klepsch (deputizing for Mr Memmel), Mrs Kruchow, Mr Liogier, Mr Mitchell, Mr W. Müller, Mr K. Nielsen, Mr Noè, Mr Nyborg (deputizing for Mr Krieg), Mr Osborn, Mr Ripamonti, Mr Santer (deputizing for Mr Vandewiele), Mr Schwabe, Mr Veronesi and Mrs Walz.

The opinion of the Committee on Budgets is attached.

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The Committee on Energy and Research hereby submits to the European Parliament the following motion for a resolution together with explanatory statement :

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

embodying the opinion of the European Parliament on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council for a decision reviewing the energy research and development programme adopted by the Council's decision of 22 August 1975

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council¹;
 - having been consulted by the Council pursuant to Article 235 of the Treaty establishing the EEC (Doc. 264/76);
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Energy and Research and the opinion of the Committee on Budgets (Doc. 403/76);
1. Points out that it approved the proposal for an energy research and development programme;
 2. Stresses once more the importance to the Community of an energy research programme;
 3. Points out that only a policy aimed at saving energy and developing new sources will enable the Community to reduce its dependence on imported energy and that consequently research in these fields is essential;
 4. Notes that, as it has requested, the energy research and development programme has been reviewed after the first year of operation;
 5. Welcomes the Commission's success in coordinating indirect and direct research activities;
 6. Believes that the proposed changes are appropriate at the present stage of the programme;
 7. Approves the proposed changes to the energy research and development programme.

¹ OJ No. C 241, 14.10.76, p. 5.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENTI. INTRODUCTION

1. By its decision of 22 August 1975 (OJ No. L 231, 2 September 1975), the Council adopted an energy research and development programme.

In adopting, on 13 March 1975, the resolution tabled on behalf of our committee by Lord Bessborough, the European Parliament expressed its strong approval of the research programme proposed by the Commission.

2. The programme, which covers a four-year period from 1 July 1975, has five project areas:

- energy conservation,
- production and utilization of hydrogen,
- solar energy,
- geothermal energy,
- systems analysis: development of models.

3. The Council decision provides for the research work to be carried out mainly under contracts concluded by the Commission with other bodies. The decision also stipulated that the first phase of the programme would end in December 1976. This first phase, with an appropriation of 12 million u.a., was designed to allow the Commission to draw up contracts, specifying the research objectives in each of the five fields. The second phase, lasting until 30 June 1979, will receive an appropriation of 47 million u.a. At the end of the first phase (end of 1976), as our committee expressly requested in the Bessborough report, the programme is to be reviewed after the Scientific and Technical Research Committee (CREST) has delivered its opinion.

4. In line with the Council's decision, the Commission is now submitting for our consideration its proposals for the review of the energy research and development programme. It should be stressed that consultation of the European Parliament is compulsory since the proposal for a decision reviewing the programme is based on Article 235.

II. THE PROPOSED CHANGES

(1) Production and utilization of hydrogen

5. This programme is at present subdivided into 3 projects dealing with :
- thermochemistry,
 - electrolysis,
 - utilization.

Since the project is concerned with 'utilization of hydrogen', the Commission feels that the parts of the programme devoted to hydrogen storage should not be confined to studies on small-scale storage. It therefore proposes that the research programme be extended to :

- industrial-scale storage,
- and the distribution of hydrogen.

(2) Solar energy

6. The Commission proposes that the 'photovoltaic conversion' project should be supplemented by the following two new research fields:

- new or improved encapsulating materials,
- data collation.

(3) Geothermal energy

7. This programme at present includes a project on steam sources and hot rocks. Research on hot dry rocks forms part of this project.

The Commission proposes that research on hot dry rocks become the subject of a separate chapter.

III. COMMENTS

8. The review proposals involve no increases in the original budgetary appropriations for the programme. Similarly, no changes are planned for the allocation of the appropriations.

9. As regards the very limited nature of the proposed changes, the Commission admits that at the present stage of the implementation of the programme it does not seem appropriate to make any major changes. The technical and scientific content of the programme (on which Parliament has already given its views in the Bessborough report) covered by the Council's decision of August 1975 is still valid. It should also be pointed out that at its meeting of 24 September 1976, CREST delivered a favourable opinion on the review proposals presented by the Commission.

10. It should be noted that in presenting this proposal, the Commission recognizes that it is too early to expect scientific results from the programme. It points out, however, that from the very beginning of the first phase close and very effective cooperation was established between the relevant Directorate-General and the JRC departments responsible for energy research. The Commission says that 'this has ensured a systematic harmonization between the different sectors of direct and indirect action'.

11. The rapporteur welcomes this coordination, which is in line with a wish frequently expressed by our committee.

IV. CONCLUSION

12. Subject to the above comments, the Committee on Energy and Research approves the proposal for a decision presented by the Commission.

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON BUDGETS

Letter from the chairman to Mr Gerd SPRINGORUM, chairman of the Committee on Energy and Research

Luxembourg, 1 October 1976

Dear Mr Chairman,

At its meeting of 22 September 1976 the Committee on Budgets considered the Commission's proposal for a Council decision reviewing the energy research and development programme adopted by the Council's decision of 22 August 1975 (Doc. 264/76) and instructed me to forward its opinion to your committee by letter.

The proposal provides for certain additions or further sub-divisions to some of the projects covered by the original Council decision, but does not envisage any increases to the funds already allocated by Council Decision No. 75/510/EEC of 22 August 1975.

In addition, this Council decision will authorize the Commission to re-allocate funds among the five project areas within a limit of 10% of the present amount for each area.

The Committee on Budgets has no objection to the annual review of the energy research and development programme and can therefore approve the proposal for a Council decision.

(sgd.) Erwin LANGE

