

The experience of the preparatory process has also encouraged the Commission to take further steps towards a possible high-level meeting on energy, particularly in establishing, on an *ad hoc* basis, the Senior Advisers to ECE Governments on Energy as a new principal subsidiary body. In view of the close links that exist between environment and energy (which are evident in all the principal items for decision at the high-level meeting in November), this new initiative is likely to effect the in-depth review of the ECE work programme in the field of environment '... from the point of view of concentration, integration, and coordination', which the thirty-fourth session of the Commission also requested be undertaken during the next twelve months.

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AACHEN CONGRESS ON 'PREVENTION OF TRANSFRONTIER POLLUTION AND COOPERATION BETWEEN LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES', HELD AT THE 'EUROGRESS', AACHEN, WEST GERMANY, 3-5 APRIL 1979

At the close of this 'Aachen Congress on the Prevention of Transfrontier Pollution', the 200 or so representatives of local and regional authorities in Europe, and of transfrontier organizations, launched an urgent appeal to the member States of the Council of Europe\* for the immediate adoption of the draft European outline Convention on transfrontier cooperation between territorial communities or authorities. They also called for the setting up of a special body to organize an exchange of information and experience on all matters relating to cooperation across frontiers and assist local and regional authorities in implementing the outline Convention.

The Congress, organized by the Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, took stock of national, regional, and local, experiments in transfrontier cooperation in Europe, and of the activities of the international organizations in this field. It also considered the question of establishing international pollution standards.

In their final declaration, the participants called for broader decentralization of powers of transfrontier cooperation to municipalities and regions, as these are the best framework for the prevention and control of pollution. Further, they stressed the need for local and regional, elected representatives to be associated with existing inter-state commissions. The establishment of mixed regional commissions (comprising representatives of central, regional, and local, governments and outside experts) received much encouragement from the Congress.

The states of Europe were also urged to harmonize their environmental protection policies, particularly by

the following means:

- Mutual consultation on all activities entailing a risk of pollution across frontiers;
- Equal access to information and assistance for citizens on both sides of a frontier;
- Application of the principle of non-discrimination, obliging the states or competent authorities to take account of environmental protection in the neighbouring states when carrying out ecological impact studies and public inquiries; and
- Application of the 'polluter pays' principle in the case of transfrontier pollution.

Lastly, the Congress proposed that a meeting of regions bordering the Rhine, and another meeting of regions in the Mediterranean, should be held in order to discuss as a matter of priority the serious pollution problems affecting those regions.

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IMPORTANT PROSPECT: SYMPOSIUM ON THE EFFECTS OF AIRBORNE POLLUTION ON VEGETATION, TO BE HELD IN WARSAW, POLAND, DURING 20-24 AUGUST 1979

An important international, intergovernmental 'Symposium on the Effects of Airborne Pollution on Vegetation' is being held in August of this year, under the auspices of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (covering Europe, USSR, and North America) with the support of UNEP.

After introductory papers on the types of airborne pollutants and their transport, participants will discuss in some detail their effects (headings include morphological, physiological, and biochemical, effects, integrative effects on ecosystems, effects on product quality, comparative sensitivities of vegetation types, reactions to subnecrotic pollution, identification of resistant or tolerant strains, etc.). However, the Symposium is intended to go beyond purely scientific topics, although these will be at the heart of the discussions; for monitoring methods and systems, economic assessment of damage, and criteria for legislation, will also be discussed.

The subject of air pollution effects takes on a special importance in the light of efforts by ECE governments to draw up a Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution, which should be signed at a high-level meeting in November 1979.\* The Symposium will take place from 20 to 24 August and be preceded by a study tour from 17 to 19 August. Further details are available from the ECE/FAO Agriculture and Timber Division, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10.

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\*Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and the United Kingdom.

\*See the project mentioned by Dr C. Ian Jackson in his account of the latest Session of the Economic Commission for Europe, published on pp. 163-4 of this issue.—Ed.