

# EDITORIAL

*We mentioned in the last issue that several meetings were to be held during the Summer months under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency. The Special Session called by the Agency as a result of the Chernobyl disaster, and held concurrently with the 30th General Conference of the IAEA Member States, has now been concluded. The General Conference did not achieve the progress hoped for with regard to the question of competence for the safety of installations and the relevant inspections. However, the positive results of the Special Session, culminating in the signing of the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident (see page 162) and Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency (see page 165) were a welcome surprise, especially as the former will come into force so soon.*

*Also in the last issue (see pages 114 and 133), we reported the criticism of the European Council for Environmental Law on the French Government's inability to fulfil the requirements of the Convention for the Protection of the Rhine against Chlorides. Recently, a new French proposal has been put forward, and Prime Minister Chirac has had discussions with his Dutch counterpart to explain the details to him. These would appear to be the following:*

*Under the 1976 Agreement, the French Government promised to reduce the salt load to the Rhine by 20 Kilogrammes per second, in a single action. They now propose to stock-pile 11 Kg, to change the production process so that 4 Kg can be produced and stored as thawing salt, and for the remaining 5 Kg they propose to reduce the salt introduced into the Moselle to this amount. At the moment France is permitted to release 38 Kg maximum into the part of the Moselle flowing from Lorraine, so this will mean a new amount of 33 Kg. The additional costs incurred (under the Chloride Agreement France is already receiving money from the other riparian States), France has promised to carry itself. However, it is questionable if these measures will really add up to a reduced load of 20 Kg for the Rhine, and this proposition will be considered soon at the next meeting of the Rhine Commission. Doubts have been raised that France is, perhaps, not using up all of the 38 Kg permitted for the river, so that there will not indeed be a genuine reduction of 20 Kg. In Alsace there are also worries that the stock-pile could leak into the ground water, and contaminate it, which would then have to be pumped out and stored somewhere.*

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*In the last issue we reported on the submission of the IUCN Commission on Environmental Policy, Law and Administration (CEPLA) to the WCED, concerning proposals for international environmental law developments. Since then, the Experts Group on Environmental Law set up by the WCED itself, has made its proposals. The CEPLA proposals were available to the Group at its last meeting and several of the EGEL proposals (see page 140) bear a striking resemblance to those of CEPLA — although, unfortunately, we found no reference to this in the documents of the report submitted to the WCED.*

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*The discussions in the Community on the Single European Act are still continuing (see last issue at pages 115 and 133). In the Federal Republic of Germany this has led to an unprecedented occurrence in the Federal Parliament.*

*With regard to this question the Cabinet has to submit a counter position to that of the Second House, but has not yet reached agreement. So the debate in Parliament has had to be cancelled and the point struck from the agenda.*

*On the same question, the Commission on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection of the European Parliament have prepared and adopted a draft opinion and conclusions for the consideration of the Political Affairs Committee. Although they agree that the Act is, in some ways, an improvement on the status quo, they level many criticisms against it. One of them being that Parliament will continue to play only a consultative role in environmental protection proposals. They feel this would have been an opportunity for the new co-operation procedure between Commission, Council and Parliament to have been applied. We shall report on future developments. □*

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*Woffrey Brucey*