

European Genome Program Delayed?

The Brussels-based Commission of the European Economic Community (EEC) has apparently decided to delay the introduction of a new program aimed at stimulating European research efforts on the human genome. The decision follows complaints from the European Parliament that the planned research program does not pay sufficient attention to the social and ethical implications of genome research.

Under a project initially entitled "predictive medicine," which has since had its name changed to "human genome analysis," the commission had asked the Parliament for authority to spend \$19 million over the next 3 years to support individuals and research groups throughout Europe working on techniques for analyzing both the structure and functioning of the human genome.

The commission's proposals have generated a fierce debate in the European Parliament over the possibility that detailed knowledge of the genetic makeup of individuals could be used as a form of discrimination (*Science*, 3 February, p. 599). The Parliament subsequently decided it would approve the program only if some of the money is used to finance, for example, stud-

ies of the history of eugenics movements, or for public information campaigns emphasizing both the potential benefits and hazards of human gene analysis and therapy.

Last week, during a meeting in Brussels of the research ministers of the 12 EEC member states, Filippo Pandolfi, the recently appointed Commissioner responsible for the commission's research programs, said that in view of the controversy the proposal has aroused, he intended to "stop" the proposed research program. Officials in Brussels say they are uncertain of the precise significance of his remarks. But the dominant interpretation is that Pandolfi, who has been unavailable for further comment since the research ministers' meeting, wants more time to consider possible revisions to the proposed research program following the amendments passed by the Parliament.

The result of his action, according to those closely associated with developing the program, is to make it inevitable that the start of the new program, which was to have been backdated to 1 January, will now be delayed by at least several months—if the program manages to get off the ground at all.

■ DAVID DICKSON

Bonn Launches Wind Energy Experiment

Bonn

West Germany has begun a large-scale experiment to generate electricity using wind power. According to Heinz Riesenhuber, West German Research Minister, the project will result in the production of 100 megawatts of electricity by 1994 and make West Germany the world's leading promoter of wind-generated electricity.

The project, called "100 mW Wind," will begin with a demonstration phase followed by the construction of large single wind generators and four experimental wind parks. The experiment will focus on wind-rich North German regions. West Germany already has 53 wind generators that supply 3.5 megawatts of power.

The total cost of the project over the next 5 years will be \$222.2 million. Businesses and individuals will receive either a subsidy of 4 cents per kilowatt-hour or a grant of 30 to 40% of the construction costs.

According to Riesenhuber, wind is the only renewable energy that has a realistic chance of being competitive. He estimates that national and regional government subsidies could drop the price to consumers to about 4 cents per kilowatt-hour, making wind energy competitive with oil-fired electricity generation.

■ DON KIRK

Marchuk Admits Flaws in Election

Guri Marchuk, the president of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences, has admitted that mistakes were made in the procedures used by the academy to select its candidates for next Sunday's election of members of the Congress of Peoples Deputies.

Marchuk's comments, contained in an article published in the Soviet daily *Pravda*, follow widespread protests about the way a special meeting had approved the candidacies of only 23 out of 130 nominees put forward by individual research institutes to represent the academy in the congress. The nominations of "dissident" scientists such as Andrei Sakharov and Roald Sagdeyev, who are not members of the organization's current hierarchy, were rejected.

The academy has refused to bow to demands that the choice of its official candidates should be reconsidered, but Marchuk acknowledges that "there is undoubtedly something to discuss" in the criticism of the selection procedures. He said it is "inevitable" that mistakes would be made in implementing the new election laws, and added that "increasingly, broad strata of the population, including scientific workers, are be-

ing drawn into political and social restructuring in the country. Some mistakes are also inevitable on this path."

Marchuk is said to have come under considerable criticism from within the Soviet administration for the way in which the whole affair has been handled. Ironically, if he is replaced after the elections—which some are claiming to be a possibility—one of the potential candidates as his successor would be the chairman of the commission that is overseeing the elections, organic chemist Valentin Koptug, who is a vice president of the academy and chairman of its powerful Siberian Division.

Elsewhere in the *Pravda* article, Marchuk calls for a sharp increase in the diversity of types of scientific research organizations and institutions in the Soviet Union, and for a substantial modernization of the academy's charter "to bring it in line with the radical changes which have taken place and are continuing to take place in the country." He argues that spending on basic research should be increased substantially and says there is a need for a "fundamental review" of pay scales for scientists. ■ DAVID DICKSON

... Britain Picks Site for Wind Farm

London

British scientists, who have recently calculated that at least 20% of the country's electricity needs could be generated by wind, are about to begin a 12-month study of a site in southwestern Wales as a possible location for Britain's first high-technology wind farm, it was announced last week.

Two other sites also have been jointly proposed by Britain's Department of Energy and its Central Electricity Generating Board. They are in Cornwall and on the Pennine Hills in the center of England. Each site will eventually have 25 wind turbine machines.

The results from the tests in Wales will be analyzed with the use of advanced supercomputing facilities by scientists at the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory of the Science and Engineering Research Council. SERC officials claim that Britain has some of the best sites in Europe for wind turbines and wind farms. ■ DAVID DICKSON