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SCIENCE, founded in 1880, is published each Friday by the American Association for the Advancement of Science at Business Press, Lancaster, Pa. Entered at the Lancaster, Pa., Post Office as second class matter under the Act of 3 March 1879.

SCIENCE is indexed in the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* and in the *Industrial Arts Index*.

Editorial and personnel-placement correspondence should be addressed to SCIENCE, 1515 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington 5, D.C. Manuscripts should be typed with double spacing and submitted in duplicate. The AAAS assumes no responsibility for the safety of manuscripts or for the opinions expressed by contributors. For detailed suggestions on the preparation of manuscripts, book reviews, and illustrations, see *Science* 125, 16 (4 Jan. 1957).

Display-advertising correspondence should be addressed to SCIENCE, Room 740, 11 West 42 St., New York 36, N.Y.

Change of address notification should be sent to 1515 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington 5, D.C., 4 weeks in advance. If possible, furnish an address stencil label from a recent issue. Be sure to give both old and new addresses, including zone numbers, if any.

Annual subscriptions: \$7.50; foreign postage, \$1; Canadian postage, 50¢. Single copies, 25¢. Special rates to members of the AAAS. Cable address: Advancesci, Washington.

The AAAS also publishes THE SCIENTIFIC MONTHLY.

Euratom

Recently the representatives of six European nations signed both the common-market pact for the establishment of the European Economic Community and the Euratom agreement, formally known as the European Atomic Energy Community, which provides for a European Atomic Energy Commission to distribute nuclear material to the member states and to grant financial and technical assistance to research and development projects within the European Economic Community. The treaties for Euratom and EEC were signed by Italy, France, West Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg, and we hope that these pioneering governments will proceed with speedy ratification. These countries have a combined population of 160 million; they represent, therefore, more than one-half of non-Soviet Europe.

The Euratom agreement stipulates that the European Atomic Energy Commission shall be the owner of all nuclear material produced by member states, and that all contracts made with third parties outside the common-market area must be approved by the commission. This agency will handle procurement of nuclear raw materials for member nations and will also have first buying right on all the nuclear production of the Euratom countries. Further, the commission will coordinate the research programs of the member states and create a combined training and research center to carry out projects that the states are unable to undertake individually.

A complex system for exchange of nonpatented and patented information and collection of research data has also been incorporated in the agreement. Another major task of the commission will be the establishment of common health and protective measures to be applied in the use and production of nuclear materials.

The United States has reacted favorably to Euratom. After a series of talks between U.S. officials and three Euratom representatives in February, the State Department and the Atomic Energy Commission issued a statement promising assistance and fully endorsing the Euratom plans (15 million kilowatts of atomic power plant capacity within 10 years). This country has agreed to supply nuclear fuel, and already a five-man team of American specialists is preparing to leave for Europe. Britain, too, is sending a groups of consultants and has offered to train European scientists in the reactor schools at Harwell and Calder Hall and to "facilitate contracts between United Kingdom firms and firms within the Euratom countries interested in building nuclear reactors."

The long-sought United States of Europe need no longer be considered an idealist's dream, for it is growing from the establishment among nations of effective, mutually beneficial working arrangements on specific problems. For example, in 1953 the European Coal and Steel Community was formed; its members are identical with those of Euratom and EEC.

Euratom and EEC had their inception at a meeting at Messina, Italy, in June 1955, when the foreign ministers of the six cooperating countries adopted a resolution saying that their governments believed that it was the "right moment to start anew on the way towards a united Europe. . . ." Action to put the resolution into effect was begun at once, and in the remarkably short period of 19 months the complex technical problems and conflicting national interests involved in such a revolutionary undertaking are well on the way to being resolved. Although the EEC and Euratom treaties are so far only pledges, since they still have to be approved by the governments concerned, they may well turn out to be milestones in the integration of Europe.—B. P.

