

# EDITORIAL

*At the end of September, the annual conference of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund will be held in Berlin. The authorities there are taking high security measures as some noise has been promised — from among others, supporters of the Green Party — mostly because of the environmental consequences of the Bank's past policies.*

*Certainly, the Bank did not take environmental considerations into account, and much harm was done. As a result of continuous pressure from environmentally concerned people and increasing enlightenment on the part of some of its staff, the Bank established very belatedly, a central department for environmental questions.*

*Although the new staff seems to be very motivated, it could be that some of the experts chosen are not experienced enough to get such a change off the ground. The indispensable diplomacy needed to bring the various disciplines together, seems to be not yet realized. But as it is usual in such a case to grant "a first 100 days" of grace (which undoubtedly has to be extended for an international body!), we prefer to adopt a "wait and see" policy at the moment.*

*It will therefore be interesting to see if a new approach or new initiatives are evident at the Berlin meeting.*

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*The Summer meeting of the UN Economic and Social Council was held in Geneva from the 6-29 July. Most of the discussions in the plenary during the time devoted to environmental questions, concerned the problem of the illegal traffic in toxic and dangerous products and wastes, as well as traffic not carried out in compliance with internationally accepted guidelines and principles in this field (See also page 103).*

*Amusing in this connection was the quibbling between the Swiss delegate and UNEP's Executive Director. The question troubling them was whether the host country — in this case Switzerland — was the "inviter" to the diplomatic conference next Spring to finalize the convention, or only the "financier" and if UNEP is indeed the actual "inviter". Although this could be regarded as an interesting legal puzzle, delegates felt that such discussions did not have to be held so publicly.*

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*EC Environment Ministers agreed at a special session in Luxembourg on 28 June on a compromise proposal for a Community-wide lower standard for automobile exhaust fumes.*

*Brice Lalonde, the French State Secretary responsible for the Environment surprisingly rejected the agreement on his return to Paris! His action is even more extraordinary when one considers that he is a past presidential candidate for the French ecology party. If his action is the result of political pressure, it is strange that in such a situation he did not resign his appointment.*

9 September 1988

*— Wolfgang Brune —*