

# EDITORIAL

*At its last meeting, the OECD expanded its polluter-pays-principle to cover industrial accidents and we have given prominence to this important move on pages 162 and 184.*

*This international lead was followed on the European level by the EEC which on 2 August proposed strict polluter-pays rules for the Member States. These require, inter alia, that companies pay the clean-up costs for any environmental damage caused by their waste. The new proposal, which must be approved by the Community Environment Ministers before it comes into effect, is aimed at putting the victim in an easier position to receive compensation and at harmonizing national legislation within the Community on this subject.*

*However, criticism has been raised by Community industry associations, in particular, the European Federation of Chemical Manufacturers, who emphasize that a financial ceiling or mandatory insurance is necessary (neither of which are foreseen in the proposal), otherwise the costs for industry will be exorbitant.*

*The proposal to establish a new European environmental agency -- a top political priority for the second half of this year -- has also come in for criticism. The European Environmental Bureau, a Brussels-based lobby group which brings together various NGOs, is concerned that the new body will not be sufficiently independent of Member States governments and therefore will not have the wide-spread popular support it needs to achieve its aims. "As the proposed agency has no executive powers, its functions (will be) strictly confined to the collection and dissemination of environmental information".*

*But no proposal is submitted by the EEB as to what should be done instead. It is obvious that the new agency cannot be something like the US Environmental Protection Agency, since this has to be compared with Director General Commission, nor can it be similar to the Federal German institution in Berlin, as this has no executive power at all.*

*A report on the proposal to establish the agency, together with the European Environmental Monitoring and Information Network, will appear in the next issue of the journal.*

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*Just before going to print I learned of the death of Sir Peter Scott, the naturalist and broadcaster. As he was neither a lawyer nor a politician, some readers might feel that he would have had no connection with this journal. But I am glad to say that I have learned much from him in the course of the many meetings we sat through together. On more than one occasion his persuasive argumentation changed my too "legalistic" way of thinking!*

*I am conscious of the privilege it was to have been able to collaborate with Sir Peter over so many years.*

6 September 1989

*- Wolfgang B. Remy -*