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The New European Emissions Standards

The footnote in the preceding paper by M. P. Walsh on the implications for climate modification due to vehicle emissions, points out that recent changes in European Economic Community standards will invalidate some of the data and some of the conclusions therein.

The "Luxembourg" agreement of June 1985 set carbon monoxide, hydrocarbon and nitrogen oxides emissions standards for cars with large (over 2 litres capacity) and medium (1.4 to 2 litres capacity) sized engines. Now the Council Directive (89/458/EEC), published on 18th July 1989, sets mandatory standards for small cars (<1.4 litres capacity) which will come into effect during the year 1992.

Emission levels are monitored during a test cycle, which currently represents a

typical European city driving cycle, and in the new small car standards these are limited to 5 grams and 19 grams per test for hydrocarbons plus nitrogen oxides and carbon monoxide, respectively.

These new small car standards are equivalent to those that have been applied in the United States of America since 1983; and based upon experience gained there, it is expected that three-way catalysts employing platinum metals will be used to meet these new European standards. The result will be to retard the rate at which the activities of man are damaging the global environment. It is expected that during 1990 agreement will be reached within the European Communities to bring in similar, and also mandatory standards, to apply to medium and large cars from 1992.