

European Universities (CRE) has visited three campuses, in Genoa, Rome and Camerino, to assess their management systems. A final report will be presented to the rector of each university and made available to the public in autumn.

CRE's function is purely consultative. But university rectors consider the evaluation to be a useful means of encouraging reform of the system of allocating resources for teaching and research.

Inventor of 'herbal fuel' arrested for fraud and theft

Madras A self-taught scientist who became famous in India three years ago as the inventor of a herbal fuel for cars has been arrested. Federal investigators in Madras allege that Ramar Pillai cheated the public by selling stolen industrial chemicals as motor fuel.

Pillai, who manufactures his fuel in Madras and has 11 retail outlets, has been accused by the Central Bureau of Investigation of fraud, theft and sale of fuel comprising a mixture of chemicals potentially damaging to vehicles. Investigators seized more than 10,000 litres of Ramar Herbal Fuel, containers of chemicals, additives and a large sum of cash.

The spokesman at the Central Bureau of Investigation said that the so-called herbal

fuel was nothing more than a mixture of benzene and toluene, industrial organic chemicals. He said that Pillai and some officials in a public sector firm were systematically stealing the chemicals from refineries and making a hefty profit. Pillai's product was only a little cheaper than ordinary fuel, but he was still reported to be doing good business.

Rutherford-Appleton wins synchrotron race

London The new Anglo-French synchrotron source will be based at the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory near Didcot, Oxford.

The announcement brings to a close months of speculation about the siting of the new facility (*Nature* 402, 111 & 451; 1999). It will be a severe disappointment to those campaigning to keep the next-generation source of X-ray light at the home of the existing national source, at Daresbury Laboratories near Manchester. Staff, union officials and several members of parliament from the north of England have been campaigning to win the new source for nearly six months.

The UK government said the decision had been "difficult". One of the sweeteners offered is a £5 million (US\$7.9 million) upgrade of the existing facility at Daresbury.

Four new beamlines will extend Daresbury's lifespan from five to seven years. This means that the existing synchrotron source will operate for a while in parallel with the new synchrotron.

Switzerland rejects ban on human *in vitro* fertilization

Munich The Swiss population turned down a proposal to ban *in vitro* fertilization of humans in a plebiscite held last Sunday by a majority of 75 per cent.

The proposal was submitted by feminist and religious groups that have been campaigning against reproductive medicine since the birth of the first *in vitro* fertilized baby in Switzerland in 1985, although the number of such groups has decreased. On average, two babies conceived by methods of reproductive medicine are born each day in Switzerland.

Correction

'Celera in talks to launch private sector human proteome project' (*Nature* 403, 815–816; 2000).

The former Perkin-Elmer Corporation has changed its name to PE Corporation, and is the parent company of PE Biosystems and Celera Genomics. The brand name Perkin-Elmer now belongs to EG&G Corporation, which acquired The Perkin-Elmer Corporation's analytical instruments business in May 1999.