

Brussels, 22 August 2006

European Commission outlines proposed Joint Undertaking for the European contribution to the ITER fusion energy project

Today the Commission has published proposals for the creation of a Joint Undertaking to provide the European contribution to the ITER international fusion energy project. The European Joint Undertaking for ITER & the Development of Fusion Energy will work with European industry and research organisations to build around half of the high-technology components that make up the ITER fusion project. It will also support other projects to accelerate the development of fusion as a clean and sustainable energy source for the 21st century. The Joint Undertaking will be based in Barcelona and should be up and running by the first half of 2007.

“Building upon the success of the integrated Euratom fusion research programme, the Joint Undertaking will be a dynamic new organisation that will play a leading role in the construction of ITER and enhance Europe’s role in the technological development of fusion energy” Commissioner Potočník said today.

The Joint Undertaking's primary task will be to meet Europe’s wide-ranging obligations towards ITER, by working with European industry and research organisations to supply the components for the construction of ITER and will administer the EU’s financial contribution to the project, which will mostly come from the Community budget.

The Joint Undertaking will also contribute to the implementation of the “Broader Approach”, an agreement between the EU and Japan conceived to work on a number of joint projects to accelerate the development of fusion energy. These projects, including finalising the design for a materials testing facility and the upgrade of a fusion experiment, will complement ITER by filling possible knowledge gaps. A proposal on the “Broader Approach” will be made by the Commission later this year.

Looking to the longer term, the Joint Undertaking will progressively implement a programme of activities to prepare for the first demonstration fusion power reactors, building on the experience of ITER.

The Joint Undertaking will have a lean managerial structure, respecting accountability and transparency. Its activities will complement the other parts of the integrated European fusion energy research programme carried out in national fusion laboratories in the EU Member States and other associated European countries - Bulgaria and Romania, plus Switzerland since 1979 - under the Euratom umbrella.

A Governing Board, composed of the members of the Joint Undertaking – Euratom, the EU Member States and other associated countries, will ensure overall supervision of its activities. Day to day management of the organisation will be the responsibility of its Director. The Joint Undertaking will be able to call on the best possible scientific and technical advice through one or more Scientific Programme Boards.

The Joint Undertaking will pool resources at European level. It will receive contributions from Euratom, its members and other sources. The organisation will have its own financial rules adapted to its special tasks, particularly the procurement of high tech components from industry ensuring sound financial management.

The success of the Joint Undertaking will ultimately depend upon the expertise and dedication of its staff. In particular, the organisation will recruit top notch engineers and technicians who will interact with industries, fusion laboratories and other organisations to ensure that Europe delivers upon its international commitments to ITER and beyond.

More information

DG Research website:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fusion-for-energy.html>

See also [IP/06/676](#) and [MEMO/06/216](#) of 24 May 2006 on ITER.