FUSION FOR ENERGY

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ITER: Barcelona hosts European 'Fusion for Energy' body

European Science and Research Commissioner Janez Potočnik took part today in a ceremony to inaugurate the headquarters of the new "European Joint Undertaking for ITER and the Development of Fusion Energy", known as Fusion for Energy, based in Barcelona, Spain. ITER, the biggest scientific project on Earth, will develop fusion, a future limitless source of energy, safe and environmentally friendly, with the objective of bringing it closer to commercial use. This initiative involves 7 parties – European Union, China, Japan, South Korea, Russia, India and the United States - bringing together more than half of the world's population. ITER will be constructed in Europe (near Cadarache in Southern France), and each of the seven parties has agreed to work together with their own industry and research organisations to develop and construct the various component parts needed for the reactor. Europe, as the party hosting ITER, will contribute around half of the components. It is the task of the Fusion for Energy to organise these contributions. Fusion for energy will be based in Barcelona, Spain, and its budget will be around €4 billion for the first ten years. The host agreement providing the premises of Fusion for Energy and setting out the conditions for its activities and staff was also signed today by the Spanish Minister for Science and Education, Mercedes Cabrera Calvo-Sotelo, and Commissioner Potočnik.

"*Fusion for Energy will allow the EU to contribute to ITER in a rapid, organised and effective way,"* said Janez Potočnik, European Commissioner for Science and Research. *"By bringing together the knowledge and expertise needed for the construction of a demonstration fusion power plant, Fusion for Energy should become a centre of excellence that will allow Europe and its partners to benefit fully from fusion energy in the future. This event isn't just about opening an office; it also shows the depth of our commitment to ITER and the Broader Approach to fusion."*

Fusion for Energy has three main objectives:

- Supplying European contributions to the ITER international fusion energy project being built in Cadarache, France;
- Working with Japan on a number of projects to accelerate the development of fusion energy as part of an international agreement known as the "Broader Approach";
- Organising and coordinating a programme of activities to prepare for the first demonstration fusion reactors that can generate electricity.

The signature event will be followed by the inaugural meeting of the Joint Undertaking's Governing Board, which brings together representatives from Euratom, the EU Member States and Switzerland to ensure the overall supervision of Fusion for Energy's activities.

The ITER project is an international collaborative research project on an unprecedented scale, which will reproduce the physical reaction - fusion - that occurs in the sun and stars. Fusion has several attractions as a large-scale energy source; its basic fuels are abundant and available everywhere; no greenhouse gas emissions; no transportation of radio-active materials; no possibility of “meltdown” or “runaway reactions”; no long-lasting radioactive waste to be passed on to future generations. The international agreement setting up the project was signed in Paris in November 2006.

Also in November 2006, the EU and Japan agreed a “Broader Approach" to fusion energy, creating a privileged partnership complementing ITER. EU and Japan will work together on projects, in particular the design of a high-tech materials testing facility, which will complement research in ITER and set the basis for the construction of a future demonstration fusion power plant (DEMO). The agreement last ten years, and represents about €340m of European investment.

Background information:

Fusion for Energy: IP/06/1116

Broader Approach: IP/06/1608

ITER: MEMO/06/216

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