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Search [Go!](#)
[Detailed search](#)

[Back](#)

[Home](#)

[FP6](#)

[Presidency](#)

[ERA](#)

[FP5](#)

[Calls](#)

[Forthcoming Events](#)

[Interviews](#)

[Email News Alert](#)

[Republication Licence](#)

[CORDIS focus](#)

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[Print latest News](#)

[Press Service](#)

[CORDIS Express](#)

[CORDIS Wire](#)

Final ITER decision pencilled in for March

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Delegations from the six partners involved in negotiating the site for the proposed international thermonuclear experimental reactor (ITER) met in Vienna, Austria, on 21 February, but were unable to reach a common decision.

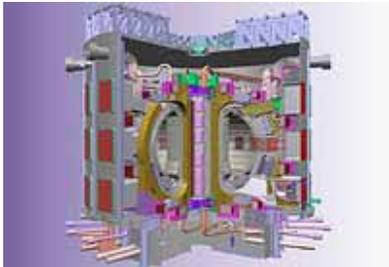
According to a common statement by China, Japan, the European Union, Russia, the Republic of Korea, and the United States: 'ITER parties will continue their discussions including further exploration of a broader project approach to fusion power. All delegations reaffirmed their commitment to the consensual process towards joint implementation of ITER.'

The partners agreed to convene a meeting of technical experts in early March, with the main objective of completing a technical analysis. A spokesperson for the European Commission told CORDIS News that a final meeting aimed at reaching a decision was also planned for March, but that arrangements still need to be made.

'Negotiations are still ongoing, and no major breakthroughs were made during the meeting in Vienna,' said the spokesperson. 'The European Union remains confident in its ability to persuade the other ITER partners of the suitability of the site in Cadarache [France].'

Asked to comment on reports suggesting that Japan may be ready to develop its own reactor if its site at Rokkasho-Mura is not selected, the spokesperson told CORDIS News: 'There has been no official confirmation of this report. Of course, Japan is free to do so if it chooses, but the EU will await official presentation of the details before taking a view.'

For further information, please consult the following web address:
<http://www.iter.org>



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