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## EU slams US support for Japan to host nuclear fusion project

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EU Research Commissioner Philippe Busquin on Friday slammed a declaration of US support for Japan's bid to host an experimental nuclear fusion reactor instead of France.

"It is inappropriate and inopportune to make such declarations at a time when there is a process of evaluation (for the competing bids) going on," the Belgian commissioner told AFP through his spokesman, Fabio Fabbi.

US Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham said during a visit to Tokyo Friday that Japan offers "the superior site" to host the multi-billion-dollar International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) project.

ITER will be located either in the French southeastern town of Cadarache, which defeated a Spanish site to be chosen as the European Union's bid, or the northern Japanese village of Rokkasho-mura.

It aims to be a test bed for what is billed as the clean, safe, inexhaustible energy source of the future, emulating the sun's nuclear fusion. The project, however, is not expected to generate electricity before 2050.

Among the project's backers, the EU has won support from China and Russia to site ITER at Cadarache. Japan has the backing of South Korea and now the United States.

The six partners tried to choose the winning bid at a meeting in Washington on December 20, but failed to decide. A fresh meeting has been called for next month to review the results of the current evaluation study.

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