

Japanese and Europeans did not fall from agreement on ITER reactor

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The discussions in Austria finished without agreement.

The European negotiators hoped, Tuesday November 9 in Vienna, to tear off an international agreement in favour of the construction of the engine of research on nuclear fusion ITER in the south from France, in Cadarache (Rhône delta). The construction and the exploitation of the engine involve an investment of about 10 billion dollars (7,7 billion euros) over thirty years. The discussions were completed at the end of the day without any agreement.

The candidature of Cadarache east in competition with that of Rokkasho, a village located at an about sixty kilometers of the town of Aomori, which shelters the Japanese installations of nuclear fuel: the site of final storage of waste with low radioactivity; a factory of enrichment and the first commercial plant reprocessing about to be completed. Project ITER is the promise of new economic repercussions for an area where considerable sums were already spent in order to make him agree the idea to become the greatest Nipponese nuclear site. These generosities allowed the construction of modern infrastructures in a zone known especially, before, for its production of apples.

At the time of bilateral contacts, Monday November 8, the European delegation tried to find an agreement with Japan, so that this one withdraws race. The part did not seem not gained, Tuesday morning, an agreement being considered to be "possible without being acquired". Tokyo let know since it maintained its candidature. In exchange of a renouncement, Europeans propose counterparts with the Japanese in a their trustful part of the scientific programs for a reduced financial contribution. The European candidature is supported by Russia and China, while that of Japan is supported by the United States and South Korea. "On the assumption of a rallying of Japan, Korea will support the European Union, and the United States will probably make in the same way, because they never wanted to build ITER on their premises", estimates a diplomat.

SAVOIR-FAIRE OF FRANCE

"the Japanese did not release yet, Europeans will never release, the negotiations continue", continues another. With the initiative of France, which sees in this project a good means of renewing its nuclear know-how, the Twenty-five started, mid-October, to study the possibility of building costs which the prototype costs, with the only support of the Russians and the Chinese. The minister delegated research, to François d' Aubert, then committed himself doubling the French financial participation, to carry it to 914 million euros on the some 5 billion planned for the only phase construction.

This initiative had received a mitigated reception, certain Member States wishing not too not to weigh down the European contribution. From where the search for a compromise. The European Commission counted much on these "negotiations of the last chance" to rejoin the whole of the countries. In the event of failure Tuesday, the Commission, which negotiates on behalf of the Union, should approach the French proposal by recommending the construction of ITER without the support of all the partners.

Philippe Ricard (with Philippe Pons in Tokyo)

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