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Nuclear Fusion Construction Deal Expected at Russia's G8 Summit

MOSCOW, Russia, February 3, 2006 (ENS) - An international agreement on the construction of the ITER international experimental nuclear fusion reactor is expected to be signed during a G8 summit in St. Petersburg in July 2006, said Yevgeny Velikhov, a member of the Russian Academy of Sciences and president of the Kurchatov Institute research center.

"We expect that ministers from the U.S., Japan, China, South Korea, India and Russia, and the European Union will sign an interstate agreement on the construction of the ITER during the summit in St. Petersburg," Velikhov told journalists on Wednesday, Interfax news agency reported.

Russia assumed the rotating chair of the G8 group of industrialized countries that includes Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States at the beginning of the year.

The core topics for the G8 meeting are energy security in the world, the fight against infectious diseases, and education, Russian President Vladimir Putin said at a press conference Tuesday in Moscow.

ITER is to be constructed in Europe, at Cadarache, near Aix-en-Provence, France, under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Final negotiation on the joint implementation agreement of ITER was concluded December 6, 2005, in Jeju, South Korea. This meeting also admitted India to the Parties contributing to the ITER endeavor. Seven governments representing half of the world's population are now directly involved in the project.

ITER (pronounced as in fitter) is based around a hydrogen plasma torus operating at over 100 million degrees Celsius, and is intended to produce 500 megawatts of fusion power. It is technically ready to start construction and the first plasma operation is expected in 2016.



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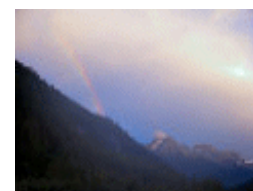
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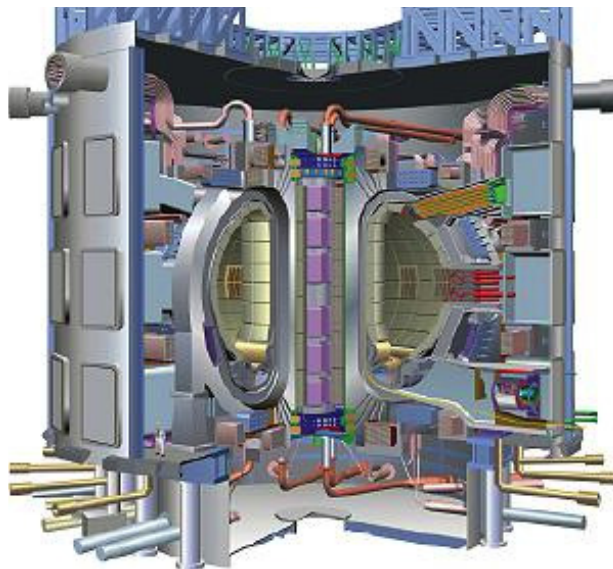
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the ITER (Photo courtesy [U.S. Energy Department](#))

Nuclear fusion - the energy produced by the Sun and other stars, involves the bringing together of atomic nuclei. When two light atomic nuclei are brought together to make a heavier one, the binding energy of the combined nucleus can be more than the sum of the binding energies of the component nuclei. This

energy difference is released in the fusion process.

Nuclear fission powers today's nuclear plants. When heavy nuclei split, the binding energies of the pieces can be more than that of the whole, and the excess energy is released in the fission process.

Nuclear fusion research is considered worth pursuing because "it promises to be a widely available energy source with essentially unlimited supply and manageable environmental impact," according to a statement by the cooperating countries.

ITER is viewed as the experimental step between today's studies of plasma physics and nuclear fusion power plants of the future that will produce electricity.

ITER began with an initiative at the 1985 Geneva Summit between the United States and the USSR. President Ronald Reagan and General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev began a process that led to today's collaboration to construct ITER to demonstrate the scientific and technological feasibility of fusion energy for peaceful purposes.

On January 30 the first ITER International Project Team staff began working at the Cadarache Joint Work Site.

J-P. Girard, E. Tada, A. Maas, J. How, A. Annicchiarico, J. Sovka, and T. Nagahama on their first day at the ITER Cadarache Joint Work Site January 31, 2006. (Photo courtesy [ITER](#))

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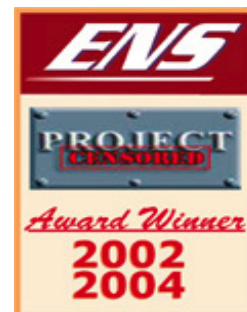
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the Safety, Environment and Health Group will ease preparations for obtaining the construction license.



The staff from the Site, Buildings and Assembly Group of the Nuclear Technology Division are there to speed up preparations for initial construction work. As the year goes on they will be joined by new recruits to the project as well as their colleagues in other areas from the previous Joint Work Sites in Garching, Germany and Naka, Japan.

This advanced party is also providing the first test for the host organization, the French Atomic Energy Commission, in supporting the relocation of the international scientific staff in the Cadarache area, as well as in setting up the basic facilities to support their work.

Meanwhile, the widespread construction of new nuclear power plants in Russia should be started by 2012, according to Federal Atomic Energy Agency Chief Sergei Kirienko, who spoke at a press conference in Zheleznogorsk, Russia on Wednesday. By 2030 it will be necessary to build about 40 nuclear power units, he said.

The Russian Federation now generates 16 to 17 percent of its energy from nuclear power, compared to France, which generates about 80 percent of its power from nuclear energy.

President Putin said Tuesday that he would like to see Russia generate 25 percent of its power from nuclear plants in 20 or 30 years.

Find out more about ITER online at: <http://www.iter.org>

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