



Thermonuclear reactor may begin to be built 2004

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MOSCOW, February 20 (Itar-Tass) -- Construction of what may become the world's first-ever thermonuclear experimental reactor (ITER) may begin already this year, Russian Atomic Energy Ministry spokesman Nikolai Shingaryov said on the eve of another working meeting of delegates from the ITER project member-states, beginning in Vienna on Saturday.

The official said Russian delegates would call on the other participants in the project to "break the deadlock over the issue of beginning the reactor's construction on the basis of a compromise."

Shingaryov recalled that Russian specialists had come up with a compromise proposal of building the reactor on the premises of the French nuclear center Cadarache, while the center of control, data processing and research will be stationed in Japan's Honshu Island.

As a global ring of computer communication and research data processing has gone operational to connect the United States, Europe, Russia and China "the proposed compromise option may be carried out successfully from the technical standpoint," the chief of the Kurchatov Institute, which developed the thermonuclear reactor, Yevgeny Velikhov said.

The Russian panel at the Vienna meeting is led by Deputy Atomic Energy Minister Igor Voronkov.

Involved in the five-billion-dollar project are Russia, the European Union, Japan, the United States, China and South Korea.

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