

EU to go it alone on nuclear project, if no deal with Japan



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BRUSSELS (AFP) - EU countries reiterated that they intended to press ahead with the construction of a pioneering nuclear energy project in France if talks with Japan, which also wants to host the facility, fail to reach a conclusion, EU sources said.



[AFP/File Photo](#)

Research ministers in Brussels endorsed a proposal to that effect by the EU commission, which is holding talks with the five other partners in the project -- China, Japan, Russia, South Korea ([news](#) - [web sites](#)) and the United States.

The budget for the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) project is expected to be some 10 billion euros (13 billion dollars) over the next 30 years, including 4.7 billion euros to build the reactor. The European Union ([news](#) - [web sites](#)) plans to finance 40 percent of the total.

The two candidate sites to host ITER, which would emulate the sun's nuclear fusion to generate inexhaustible supplies of electricity, are Cadarache in southern France and Rokkasho-mura in northern Japan.

Of the six partners in the talks China and Russia support the French site, while the United States and South Korea back building ITER in Japan.

Sources at the EU commission in Brussels said earlier this week that Tokyo might agree to a tradeoff scenario in which it lets ITER go to France if Japan gets to be host country for a new international scientific computing centre.

The project is not expected to generate electricity before 2050.

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