

Part B - Specific questions

**1) Are you prepared to support firmly the European position in the on-going ITER negotiations and, in any case, do all you can to safeguard Europe's leading position in reactor-oriented fusion research?**

Yes, I am determined to do so. From the very start of the international negotiations on the ITER experimental nuclear fusion reactor project, the Commission has firmly defended a European site. The Commission has presented the clear advantages of the European site at Cadarache and has won the backing of several other project partners.

I intend to firmly pursue the line taken by the Commission so far. Building ITER in Europe would be the best way of ensuring the project's success. It would at the same time serve to maintain the Union's leading position in fusion research, which I am determined to uphold resolutely.

Given the importance of ITER for science and for mankind and its political significance and huge implications for both EU and national budgets, it would be a major defeat if it was not possible to agree on the site with all our partners. I am looking to establish close contacts with all our partners as soon as possible to see how to agree with them to take the project forward.

**2. After three meetings to prepare a decision on ITER, the international partners in the project still have not reached agreement on its siting. In your opinion, what initiatives would make it possible to reach international agreement on the European candidate, Cadarache?**

Building ITER at Cadarache is not only very important for European research. Cadarache is also the best site in international comparison based on objective criteria. For these two reasons, our first objective must be to ensure agreement on Cadarache.

Since the beginning of 2004, the Commission has been working with its international partners to formulate a "broader approach" to the use of fusion energy, taking account of activities in this area other than the building of ITER.

If this fails, the Union could consider launching the construction of the ITER at Cadarache in an international framework with those of its partners willing to be involved, in the hope that other partners would join the project later. But this can only be the very last resort. I will do my utmost to agree on the site with all our partners.

**3) What measures do you propose to take to support the subsequent stages of development of the ITER project?**

To see a reactor-oriented strategy through to its conclusion, both in support of the construction of the ITER and as a supplement to that project, we already need to be preparing the following stages: development of materials resistant to radiation, with the help of a specific test installation; development of a system to produce a fusion fuel (tritium); and pursuing the current efforts to improve plasma confinement concepts and the studies on the socio-economic aspects of fusion energy (safety, "acceptability" and profitability).

These aspects will be covered in a substantial "ITER accompanying programme", parts of which could be carried out in an international framework under the broader approach I set out above. I intend to discuss more in detail the accompanying programme with all our international partners to see what progress can be made.

#### **4) What future do you see for magnetic fusion in the European Union's research programmes and energy policy?**

If we are to ensure energy supplies for Europe and the entire planet in an environment friendly manner, we have to call upon a whole range of power production technologies. Among these, I believe that magnetic confinement fusion, once it has been mastered at technical and commercial level, has the potential to play an important role in the longterm for the production of electricity.

Research in this area should therefore continue to occupy an important position in the Union's research policy. In addition to support for research conducted in the international context, this will also mean support for training the requisite specialised human resources, as well as work to raise awareness in industry, which will play a major role in the subsequent development phases of fusion technology.