



ITER parties come to an agreement on the world's largest international scientific partnership

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ITER, a project to demonstrate the potential of fusion as an energy source, will be the world's biggest scientific collaboration of its kind and involve countries representing over half the world's population. The 7 Parties engaged in the project met in Brussels on 24 May 2006 to confirm the agreements negotiated over the past year, following the decision to select the site for the construction and operation of ITER in Europe at Cadarache in southern France. The ITER project is an international collaborative research project on an unprecedented scale, which will reproduce the physical reaction - fusion - that occurs in the sun and stars. Fusion has several attractions as a large-scale energy source; its basic fuels are abundant and available everywhere; no greenhouse gas emissions; no transportation of radio-active materials; no possibility of "meltdown" or "runaway reactions"; no long-lasting radioactive waste to be passed on to future generations. The Seven Parties to ITER are the European Union, Russia, Japan, China, India, South Korea and the United States.

"This is a truly crucial moment, for the ITER project and for global scientific co-operation in general" said European Science and Research Commissioner Janez Poto_nik, who hosted the meeting. "Together we are forging a new model for large-scale global scientific and technical co-operation. We are sending an important message about seeing the value in working together to address our common challenges."

Since the decision last June to locate the project at Cadarache the 7 ITER Parties have been working together in a spirit of mutual confidence and co-operation, and have made remarkable progress towards the common objective of making ITER a reality as the next step in the path to developing fusion as an attractive, long-term option for supplying the energy needs of the world.

The initialling of the agreements brings to an end a long and complex negotiation process. Now each partner will confirm the adoption of the agreement according to their national laws and practice. [In the EU, this means that the Council of Ministers will be asked to adopt a decision endorsing the agreement. The EU is represented by the EURATOM Community, within which Switzerland has all the same rights and obligations as EU Member States] It is hoped that all parties will have completed the process by the end of 2006, which, in tandem with the completion of the process of gaining all necessary construction permits at the site, will mean actual construction can start in 2007.

See also [MEMO/06/216](#)