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FRANCE AND JAPAN FAIL TO RESOLVE ROW ON NUCLEAR PROJECT

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PARIS, Nov 19 (AFP) - France and Japan failed Friday to resolve their differences on where to build a revolutionary nuclear fusion project, with Foreign Minister Michel Barnier saying France was determined to host the facility.

"Our determination has not changed on that subject," Barnier said after talks in Paris with his Japanese counterpart Mubutaka Machimura.

The EU's executive arm warned Tuesday that Europe would go ahead and build the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) in France without Japan if an agreement with Tokyo is not reached "as soon as possible".

Five nations and the European Union have been cooperating to develop the reactor, a test bed for what is being billed as a clean, safe, inexhaustible energy source of the future.

Barnier his talks with Machimura as "frank", but said he remains "convinced a solution acceptable to all can be worked out."

Machimura said ITER was a project that should go forward with six parties.

"It is not in confrontation but partnership that a solution can be found," said the Japanese minister.

The deputy director of Japan's Office of Fusion Energy, Takahiro Hayashi, on Wednesday criticized threats by the EU to go ahead alone and build the reactor at Cadarache in southern France.

"(The EU's) negotiating stance is worrisome and regrettable," said Hayashi.

The United States and South Korea back building ITER at Rokkasho-mura in Japan, while China and Russia support the Cadarache site.

The ITER budget is projected to be 10 billion euros (13 billion dollars) over the next 30 years, including 4.7 billion euros to build the reactor. The European Union plans to finance 40 percent of the total.

The project, emulating the sun's nuclear fusion, is not expected to generate electricity before 2050.

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