

This story was printed from channelnewsasia.com



Title : EU ready to match Japanese offer to host ITER project: EU source
By :
Date : 16 June 2004 0718 hrs (SST)
URL : http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/afp_asiapacific/view/90192/1.html

BRUSSELS : The European Union would be prepared to match a Japanese offer to pay a greater share of the construction costs of the world's first prototype nuclear fusion reactor in order to host the project, an EU source said.

Ministers and senior EU research officials meeting in Brussels on Monday gave the European Commission their green light to increase its offer in order to break a deadlock with Japan over who will host the project, the source said.

Participants in the 10-billion-dollar International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) project are China, the European Union, Japan, Russia, South Korea and the United States.

The consortium has agreed that the host country or region is to pay 2.5 billion dollars (two billion euros) towards the project, or 48 percent of construction costs.

But a Japanese newspaper reported last month that Japan planned to offer an extra 100 billion yen (915 million dollars/750 million euros) to ensure the project is hosted on home soil. Tokyo has not confirmed the report.

The EU, which is trying to host the project at the southern French town of Cadarache, near Marseille has reportedly won support from China and Russia, while Japan, South Korea and the United States appear to prefer the Japanese site, in the northern village of Rokkasho-mura.

The thorny issue is likely to surface during a meeting of experts from ITER participant countries in Vienna on Friday.

A confidential report issued in February and obtained by AFP found the French site technically superior to the Japanese -- encouraging the EU in its ambition to host the project.

The document emphasised the lower installation costs at Cadarache, as well as the lower seismic risk level.

Among those present at Monday's meeting were Irish Deputy Prime Minister Mary Harney, whose country holds the rotating EU presidency until the end of the month, and the EU Research Commissioner Philippe Busquin.

It was also attended by French Research Minister Francois d'Aubert, his Italian counterpart Letizia Moratti, and the scientific adviser to British Prime Minister Tony Blair, David King.

- AFP

Related Story

- [Koizumi's shrine visits derail Japanese bid for China rail project](#)
- [Japan still confident of winning thermonuclear plant bid](#)
- [France chosen as EU candidate for huge thermonuclear project](#)

Copyright © 2003 MCN International Pte Ltd

[=< back to channelnewsasia.com](http://www.channelnewsasia.com)