

EU reiterates warning to Japan over nuclear project



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BRUSSELS (AFP) - The European Commission ([news - web sites](#)) reiterated the EU could press ahead with plans to build a revolutionary nuclear reactor without Japanese support, to end a standoff with Tokyo about who will host the project.



[AFP/File Photo](#)

Japan and France are vying to host the multi-billion dollar International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER), one of the most exciting ventures in international science.

But talks among the six parties involved are deadlocked: the United States and South Korea ([news - web sites](#)) support Japan's offer to build ITER in Rokkasho-mura, a northern Japanese village near the Pacific Ocean, while the EU, China and Russia back France's bid for it to be based in Cadarache, southern France.

EU science and research commissioner Janez Potocnik issued his latest barely-disguised warning to Japan over the EU's plans at a meeting of EU ministers in Brussels.

"While I intend to pursue a six-party agreement until the last possible moment, I am at the same time determined that the solution including the highest possible number of parties should be found soon, that is in due time to allow construction to start before the end of this year," he said.

He added that he continued to believe that the best solution is to build ITER with the six international parties, "not least as a model for future international joint endeavours," he said.

"And I still hope to receive a clear signal from Japan indicating their genuine willingness to pursue negotiations regarding the EU offer on a political level."

Potocnik said last week that it was pressing Japan to consider a "high political level" compromise to resolve the standoff, but Japan said it was too early to seek such a compromise as technical discussions are still ongoing.

ITER, which would emulate the sun's nuclear fusion, is not expected to generate inexhaustible supplies of electricity before 2050.

The budget for ITER is projected to be 10 billion euros (13 billion dollars) over the next 30 years, including 4.7 billion euros to build the reactor alone.

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