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### **EU, Japan call for dialogue amid row on breakthrough nuclear project**

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The European Union and Japan each called Wednesday for dialogue among the six partners on a multibillion-dollar nuclear energy project amid a deepening row over whether Japan or France will host the site.

The EU, whose bid is backed by Russia and China, has threatened to go it alone on the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) unless a deal is sealed with Japan, which is supported by the United States and South Korea.

Japanese Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura said the EU stance was "regrettable" as it would lead to "duplicated and redundant financing" of the project.

"All six countries must work together on the ITER project because of its technological difficulties," Machimura told reporters at a function marking EU-Japan people-to-people exchanges.

"Having two sites isn't a good solution. That's why we are hoping for a division of work so we can share" the project, Machimura said.

Ambassador Bernhard Zepter, head of the European Commission in Japan, also called for dialogue.

"We have an obvious interest in working together because we face problems of energy resources in common," said Zepter, who is German.

ITER, whose budget is expected to be some 10 billion euros (13 billion dollars) over the next 30 years, would emulate the sun's nuclear fusion in the hope of generating inexhaustible supplies of electricity.

The site to be built in Cadarache, France or Rokkasho-mura, Japan is not expected to generate energy before 2050.

The European Union has mulled a scenario of offering Japan a new international scientific computing centre as compensation if Japan did not host ITER. Japan has also said it is ready to discuss compromises.

 **ITER - International Fusion Energy Organisation**

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