

FUSION FOR ENERGY

Barcelona, 17 July 2007

The European Joint Undertaking for ITER and the Development of Fusion Energy ('Fusion for Energy') appoints its first Director

The Governing Board of the European Joint Undertaking for ITER and the Development of Fusion Energy ('Fusion for Energy') appointed the organisation's first Director today. This appointment follows the official inauguration of 'Fusion for Energy' at its offices in Barcelona on 28 June. The nominee Director is Dr. Didier Gambier, currently Head of Unit for the Joint Development of Fusion in the European Commission's Directorate-General for Research. With a budget of around €4 billion for the first ten years, 'Fusion for Energy' will play a key role in realising fusion as a possible future limitless source of energy and has been set up to provide the European contributions to the ITER International Fusion Energy project, the Broader Approach Agreement with Japan as well as to prepare for demonstration fusion reactors.

"I am honoured to have been appointed as the first Director of this important new European organisation" said Dr. Didier Gambier, currently Head of Unit for the Joint Development of Fusion in the European Commission's Directorate-General for Research (DG RTD). "With the construction of ITER and the Broader Approach Agreement with Japan, we are entering an exciting new phase of fusion energy development and I am convinced that 'Fusion for Energy' will play a key role in helping maintain Europe's strong position in fusion and support to ITER".

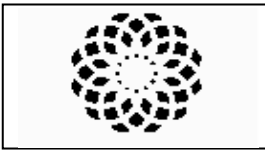
'Fusion for Energy' has three main objectives:

- Providing European contributions to the ITER¹ international fusion energy research project being built in Cadarache, France;
- Providing European contributions to a number of joint projects with Japan that aim to accelerate the development of fusion - the "Broader Approach"²;
- Coordinating a programme of activities to prepare for the first demonstration fusion reactors that can generate electricity (DEMO).

Notes for the editors:

¹ The ITER project (meaning "the way" in Latin) is an international research project under construction near Cadarache in the South of France that aims to harness fusion – the process that powers the sun and stars – on earth in order to provide a clean and virtually limitless source of energy. ITER brings together the EU, China, Japan, South Korea, Russia, India and the United States in one of the biggest scientific projects ever conceived. The international agreement setting up ITER was signed in Paris in November 2006. Europe, as the host of ITER, has committed to provide almost half of the components that make up the reactor.

² In parallel to the agreement setting up ITER, the EU and Japan agreed upon a "Broader Approach" to fusion energy, creating a privileged partnership complementing ITER. EU and Japan will work together on projects, in particular the design of a high-tech materials testing facility, which will complement research in ITER and set the basis for the construction of a future demonstration fusion power plant (DEMO). The agreement lasts ten years, and represents about €340m of European investment.



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In February 2007, the European Commission published a vacancy for the Director of 'Fusion for Energy' to which over 70 candidates responded. A shortlist of candidates was subsequently provided by the Commission to the Joint Undertaking's Governing Board in accordance with the Statutes of 'Fusion for Energy'. The Board took the decision today of appointing Dr. Gambier to the post.

Dr. Gambier started his scientific career at the French Commissariat pour l'Energie Atomique (CEA) and was later seconded to the JET fusion project in the UK after which he became a principal advisor for the ITER Engineering Design Activities in San Diego, USA. He subsequently became involved in the International Science and Technology Centre (ISTC) in Moscow and became its Executive Director in 2003, before taking on his current post in the European Commission in 2004. Dr. Gambier has played a leading role in the negotiations for the international ITER and Broader Approach Agreements and is responsible for managing the European Fusion Development Agreement (EFDA).

At the same meeting, the Governing Board also appointed Professor Carlos Varandas as its Chair and Professor Niek Lopes Cardozo as its Vice-Chair. Dr. Karl Tichmann was appointed as the Chair of the Executive Committee.

The Director of 'Fusion for Energy' will lead a team of engineers, scientists and administrative personnel who will be recruited in the coming months and will be based at the offices in Barcelona, which are being set up with the strong support of the Spanish fusion laboratory CIEMAT. It is planned that 'Fusion for Energy' will become operational towards the end of the year and place its first industrial contracts soon afterwards.

Background information:

<http://fusionforenergy.europa.eu>

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