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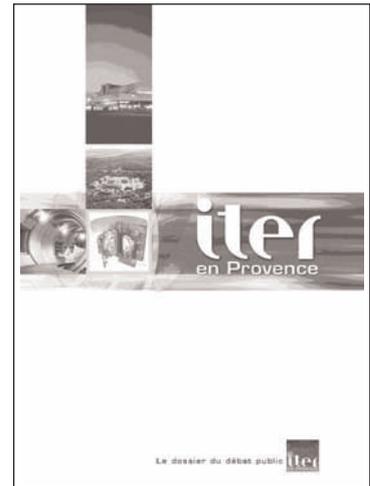
PUBLIC DEBATE ON ITER IN PROVENCE

by Dr. Akko Maas, ITER Cadarache JWS, 15 October 2006

Introduction

Following the ITER site decision on 28 June 2005, the independent Commission Nationale de Débat Public (CNDP) in France decided to have a public debate on "ITER en Provence". This is a procedure enshrined in French law since 2002 for all new projects constructed in France with significant social and environmental impact. A Commission Particulière (CPDP) was formed to organise the debate. This independent commission was chaired by Mr Patrick Legrand (researcher at INRA and former president of France Nature Environnement) and had 6 other independent members as well as its own permanent secretariat. Information on the organisation and terms of reference is available on the CPDP's website¹.

The ITER Preparatory Committee, at its meeting of 14 September 2005, delegated the Commissariat à l'Energie Atomique (CEA) in close cooperation with the International Team to act on behalf of the ITER Parties in representing the project. CEA prepared a support file for the debate entitled "ITER en Provence", which was distributed at the public meetings and was made available on the internet site managed by the CPDP (<http://www.debatpublic-iter.org>). The file was approved by the International Team in December 2005 and sent to the CPDP jointly by the IT Leader and the Director of CEA Cadarache. The Public Debate opened on 16 January 2006 and a press conference was held on 20 January.



File of the public debate



Demonstrators occupy the stage at the opening meeting in Aix-en-Provence

Opening meeting

The opening public meeting in Aix-en-Provence on 26 January was marred by demonstrations. Demonstrators, including many belonging to anti-nuclear groups, blocked the entrance to the venue. The president of the CPDP invited them to make a statement in the room and participate in the debate. Once the demonstrators had taken the stage they refused to leave. Their objections focussed mainly on the timing of the Public Debate. They argued that the debate was too late since the decision to construct ITER at Cadarache had already been taken. The President of the CPDP declared the debate open, and then immediately closed the evening's session.

¹ <http://www.debatpublic-iter.org/> (in French)

General meetings

Four general information meetings were organised in surrounding centres of population: Ste Tulle (2 February), Avignon (9 February) and Nice (16 February), and Gap (30 March). While the meeting in Ste Tulle was also disturbed by demonstrators; the meetings in Avignon and Nice were held in a friendly and calm atmosphere.



General debate meeting in Ste Tulle, close to Manosque



Thematic meeting in Salon de Provence

Thematic meetings

Thematic meetings were also organised:

23 February, Marseille, ITER and the development of the region

2 March, Aix-en-Provence, ITER, a scientific project

9 March, Salon de Provence, ITER technological and economical aspects

16 March, Pertuis, ITER environment and ecological equilibrium

23 March, Marseille, ITER governance and responsibilities

24 March, Brignolles, ITER technological and economical aspects

7 April, Paris, ITER long term prospects

13 April, Cadarache, Installation, Impact, Resources and Risks

Local meetings

Local meetings also took place in the closest communities - in St Paul lez Durance (24 February), Vinon-sur-Verdon (6 April) and Beaumont de Pertuis (27 April). Local people were invited to discussions with members of the CPDP in the afternoon, followed by an evening debate session. Mostly local impact issues were discussed at these meetings.



Local meeting in St Paul lez Durance



Special meeting in Marseille

Special meeting

Following the protests during the first public meetings, the CPDP organised a meeting with the main opposing organisations. As a result a special public meeting was convened in Marseille on 20 March, in the presence of the president of the CNDP, to debate the debate. A very limited public participation resulted in a short meeting. None of the earlier demonstrating organisations turned up for this meeting.

Questions

Nearly 600 questions were posed by the public, using the different means at their disposal. The random selection of questions given below illustrates the large variety of subjects discussed during the public debate.

- How much money will be diverted from French research budgets to ITER?
- Why do we have the debate when the decision to have ITER at Cadarache has already been taken? What difference can the debate make?
- How will ITER be integrated in the landscape? And what is the influence of this on the tourist industry?
- What is the impact on the environment? What about tritium?
- What will be the cost of a kWh produced from fusion?
- If ITER were constructed on the moon or on Mars, where would the cooling water come from?
- What is the impact of the transport of ITER components on my village?
- How do I cross the road during these transports?
- What is the risk of earthquakes on the installation? What are the consequences?
- How do we avoid that the international school becomes a school just for the elite?
- How can local industry benefit from the project?
- What about the influence on house prices?
- Should we not build a TGV station for ITER on the new line to Nice?
- Will French be an official language at ITER?
- What is the maximum temperature of the first wall?
- How will patents and results be shared between the partners?
- How is detritiation achieved?
- Does cold fusion work?
- What happens if one of the partners does not sign, or pulls out of the project?
- What is the impact of ITER on the possibility for local farmers to obtain organic accreditation?
- Why not invest in renewable energy and reduction of energy consumption?
- Is it possible to visit Tore Supra?
- Why not use computer programmes to simulate ITER?

Closing meeting

A final public meeting took place on 4 May in Marseille before the closure of the public debate on 6 May. Ambassador K Ikeda made a speech at the closing meeting. He thanked the ITER hosts, CEA, and the accompanying mission for ITER for their efforts in representing the project during the public debate. He found the debate rich in content and very useful. The debate showed a clear need of information and he committed the project to continue to listen to the local population and to inform them on the different aspects of the project. He concluded by saying that his objective is to make a success of ITER together with the ITER partners and the local population.

In total more than 2500 people participated at the different public meetings and more than 300 questions were asked during these meetings. A further 250 questions were posed on the web site. Around twenty individual contributions were also published on the web site as well as 9 so-called “Cahiers d’acteurs”.

Conclusions of the CPDP/CNDP

The report of the CPDP and the conclusion of the president of the CNDP were presented to the press on the 3rd of July 2006²[Reference]. *The spirit of the conclusion, which extends over 8 pages, can be captured in the extract quoted here: “the public debate and its content did genuinely focus on all aspects of the project: its necessity and justification, the machine characteristics, long-term issues (research, general energy options) and the effects on the region. In this respect, a strong majority seemed to be in favour of hosting ITER in Provence. Many speakers, whether organizations or individuals, emphasized conditions for this acceptance: proper management of the impact and risks, the ongoing need for information and consultation. If all these conditions were to be summarised in one phrase, it would be the integration of ITER in the region and within the society.”*

² The report and the conclusions are available on the CPDP web site <http://www.debatpublic-iter.org/> (in French)

Conclusion of the project owner

The conclusions of the project owner have been published in the Official French Journal on 10 October 2006³. In the letter sent to the president of the CNDP accompanying the official response Nominee DG Ikeda expressed: *"We share the opinion of the CPDP and CNDP in terms of the necessity and value of the debate. We are pleased that all players had the opportunity to both express themselves and be heard. The public debate particularly contributed to defining how ITER – other than through its primary interest – can help improve various regional issues in fields such employment, training and transport infrastructures.*

We remarked that even though the public expressed its interest in favour of the project, it also asserted its expectations in terms of architectural aspects, the control of impacts and risks, and the need for public awareness and consultation on the future machine over time. The public debate also highlighted a certain number of concerns, such as how foreign ITER staff will be welcomed and integrated into French society.

On behalf of the project parties, we would like to show our satisfaction in having participated in this debate within a climate of open-mindedness and mutual respect.

In conclusion, we assure you that we will be very careful to take into account public expectations as the project progresses in terms of i) the need for information and consultation, ii) the application of a "high quality" worksite label, iii) architectural choices, iv) the International School, v) the transport of heavy components and public transport, vi) stimulating economic activities, vii) employment and training, and viii) housing."

FIFTIETH ANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE IAEA

18 – 22 September 2006, Vienna

High level delegates from the Agency's 140 Member States attended the 5-day conference, which this year marked the beginning of activities commemorating the IAEA's 50th anniversary. The conference was officially opened with a guest performance from the Men's Choir of the Moscow Engineering Physics Institute.

The General Conference elected Mr. Abdul Samad Minty of South Africa as President of the General Conference. Mr. Minty is Deputy Director General of the South African Department of Foreign Affairs. He succeeded Mr. Horacio Bazoberry Otero, Bolivia's Ambassador to Austria and Resident Representative to the IAEA.

ITER-related statements are shown in the boxes below.

Statement by the IAEA Director General, M. ElBaradei

At a meeting in May, an agreement was initialled by China, the European Union, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Russia and the USA to build the world's largest fusion facility – ITER – in Cadarache, France. This decision signals an important new stage in the development of fusion energy – the scientific and engineering demonstration of fusion technology in conditions relevant to operating a fusion reactor for power production. The IAEA is the depository of ITER related agreements. While it is likely to be many years before fusion technology can be harnessed as a viable source of energy, it would bring tremendous advantages – given that fusion uses a relatively abundant fuel source, produces only minimal amounts of long lived radioactive waste, and is based on a nuclear reaction that is inherently safe.

³ Journal Officiel de la République Française, 10 octobre 2006, NOR: RECX0609574V

**Statement by Mr. Dominique Ristori, Deputy Director General,
Directorate-General for Energy and Transport, European Commission**

Let me also express the European Commission's warm appreciation of the constructive role that the IAEA has consistently played in support of the international fusion research project ITER. In particular the European Commission acknowledges that the IAEA's good offices have been instrumental in bringing the ITER Negotiations to successful completion. The European Commission now looks forward to a prompt conclusion of the Agreement among the seven ITER Parties which together represent over half of the world's population. We appreciate the IAEA's expression of intent to continue cooperation with the project, especially as concerns its function as a portal linking the project to the fusion research programmes of other states.

**Statement by Mr. Pertti Torstila, Secretary of State,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland, on behalf of the European Union**

The International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor, ITER, is one of the major international scientific and technical cooperation projects. The global need for long-term and more environmentally-friendly energy requires a large worldwide increase in research efforts on energy sources to replace fossil fuels. The European Union is a party to ITER, and will host the experimental reactor on the European site of Cadarache, in France. The EU wishes to recognise the constructive contribution of the IAEA to the ITER project. In this context, the EU welcomes the 21st IAEA Fusion Energy Conference to be held in Chengdu, China, in October 2006.

**Statement by Mr. Alain Bugat,
Chairman of the French Atomic Energy Commission, Head of the French delegation**

Regarding fusion, I would like to recall that the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) will be installed on the European site of Cadarache in France. The implementation of the organisation has known important progress, which augurs well in meeting such a technological challenge.

**Statement by Dr. Anil Kakodkar, Chairman,
Atomic Energy Commission and Leader of the Indian Delegation**

India has had a fusion research programme of its own since the early eighties. Two tokomaks have been indigenously built. The Steady State Super conducting Tokamak-SST-1 is currently undergoing commissioning tests. India has recently joined ITER as one of seven full partners. On the basis of indigenous experience and expertise available in Indian industry, India will contribute equipment to ITER and will participate in its subsequent operation and experiments.

**Statement by Mr. S.V. Kirienko, Director,
Federal Atomic Energy Agency, Head of the Russian Delegation**

Speaking about innovative nuclear technologies we maintain that one of the major events of the past year was the initialling of the draft agreement on the establishment of an international organization on fusion energy. It is a major step forward in the joint implementation of the ITER project under the IAEA auspices in the interest of the entire human race.

Statement by Mr. Sun Qin, Head of Delegation, the People's Republic of China

In a long-term view, China adopted a "three-step" approach to nuclear power development, from thermo neutron reactor to fast neutron breeding reactor and then to controlled fusion reactor. China is a member of INPRO and a participant of ITER. Last July, China made an official application to participate in GIF. China will cooperate with interested countries in developing G-4 Reactor and thermo fusion, and make due contribution to new energy solution.

**Statement by Dr. Woo Sik Kim, Deputy Prime Minister and
Minister of Science and Technology, Delegate of the Republic of Korea**

Next, I am sure that the ITER project in Cadarache of France will let us take an important step toward making fusion a viable energy source for mankind. We hope that ITER Member States will dedicate more attention to ensuring the safety of coming fusion facilities such as demonstration and commercial plants, and that IAEA will fill the leading role in developing safety principle, guidelines, and technical standards for fusion systems.

ANNOUNCEMENT:

**ITER FUSION EXPO
IAEA, VIENNA, 20 – 24 NOVEMBER 2006**

During the week of the IAEA Board of Governors Meeting, the ITER Fusion Expo will take place in the Rotunda of the Vienna International Center. The opening ceremony will be held on Monday, 20 November, at 2 p.m.

Items to be considered for inclusion in the ITER ITA Newsletter should be submitted to C. Basaldella, ITER Office, IAEA, Wagramer Strasse 5, P.O. Box 100, A-1400 Vienna, Austria, or Facsimile: +43 1 2633832, or e-mail: c.basaldella@iaea.org (phone +43 1 260026393).

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