

Dear Members of the Parliament,
Dear Member States' representatives, dear ITER Partners,
Dear industry and fusion community, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very happy that you are all here today with us to **exchange on fusion research and share the European vision of the ITER project.**

It is indeed important to take stock of the progress achieved over the last two years, and look into the challenges ahead of us.

Under EU leadership, ITER has become a truly international endeavour. This leadership was just illustrated by the interventions of my colleague Arias Cañete, Minister Vidal and Director General Bigot.

Such a pioneering project cannot be delivered by a single country. That we all know. This is why it is important that today's event is attended by participants from Europe as well as from the other ITER Members.

We have to work as “One single Team” with a joined-up vision to bring affordable and sustainable electricity to every citizen on the globe.

This is why we, in the Commission, work as a team on ITER, under the umbrella of the Energy Union project steered by my colleague Vice-President Sefcovic.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

ITER is a major investment for the future of our Energy Union. It will help us deliver the transition to a **secure, sustainable, competitive and affordable energy for every European.**

Investment in research and innovation are critical to attain our EU policy objectives – and ITER, with its forward-looking, cutting-edge dimension, is a good example of the smart use that we can make of our common budget.

But meeting the decarbonisation objectives can also **boost economic growth and create jobs**. This is why **ITER**, a major international collaboration project in frontier technologies, **is also a strategic element** for our *Jobs, Growth and Competitiveness agenda*.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The presence here today of many industry leaders shows that ITER is already having a **concrete impact on economic development** in Europe and worldwide.

ITER investment is stimulating industrial development in advanced technologies and civil engineering offering European industries and SMEs an excellent opportunity for innovation.

More than **900 procurement contracts and more than 120 grants for about 4.3 billion euros** have been awarded to companies and research centres all across the European territory.

Not to mention the many contracts and research grants awarded to European companies by the other ITER Parties.

About 75 % of the European investment in ITER is spent on the creation of new knowledge and cutting-edge materials and technology. This offers European high-tech industries and SMEs a valuable opportunity to innovate and to develop 'spin off' products for exploitation outside fusion (such as the broader aviation and hi-tech instruments like nuclear magnetic resonance and scanners).

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Support to fusion research by the European Union budget is sizeable: ITER will receive a contribution of 2.9 billion EURO over the period 2014-2020. In addition, Horizon 2020 devotes 1.6 billion EURO to investigate nuclear energy, including fusion.

And through the adoption of the Communication on the "EU contribution to a reformed ITER project" earlier this year, the Commission showed its **commitment to fund ITER until 2020** as originally planned.

With the Communication, we also clearly demonstrated **Europe's continued leadership in the project** and recognised the positive impact of the renewed leadership in the management of ITER: both the Director-General of the ITER Organization and the Director of Fusion for Energy have made strong and successful efforts to turn around the project's path.

Thanks to a **completely changed approach to the project** known as the staged approach, it should be possible to reach a major milestone in 2025 with the completion of the construction of the machine ["First Plasma"].

The full support of the EU Member States and of the European Parliament is now crucial to proceed with the endorsement of the new ITER timeline and cost estimates by the EU. This will be an important message addressed to our international partners involved in ITER.

Of course, I don't have to tell you that ITER is a complex project, for many reasons. Putting together a first-of-its-kind project of global reach is not meant to be easy and will remain challenging until the end.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This cannot be done without the industry.

In fact the industry needs to become a major driving partner of the project. It must play a key role in each and every phase of ITER and be able to respond to the evolving technical challenges on materials, assembly, safety standards, operations, etc.

ITER should learn from industry and the industry should reap the benefits of constructing and operating the first generation of fusion power plants in the future.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I believe that today's conference is a very good contribution to your work and to our initiatives.

The stakes are high. If ITER succeeds, it will open the doors not only to a **new source of energy** for our planet but also to **further collaboration amongst countries in the energy field - and beyond.**

I therefore thank you very much for devoting your time and efforts to ITER. There is a lot to be done, still, but we are on the good track and **we can be proud of ITER.**

I wish you productive discussions and a bright future for ITER and fusion!

Thank you all