

Decision

of the Bundesrat

Proposal for a Council Decision amending Decision 2007/198/Euratom establishing the European Joint Undertaking for ITER and the Development of Fusion Energy and conferring advantages upon it
COM(2013) 607 final; Council doc. 13253/13

At its 917th meeting on 29 November 2013 the Bundesrat adopted the following opinion pursuant to Sections 3 and 5 of the Law on Cooperation between the Federal Government and the Länder on EU affairs:

1. The Bundesrat rejects the Commission's proposal to finance the EU's contribution to the ITER project for the period from 2014 to 2020 from the Union's general budget. It calls on the Federal Government not to support the Commission's proposal for a Decision in the Council. The Bundesrat is opposed to providing funding for the project for the entire period of the next multiannual financial framework (i.e. the total of seven years).
2. Rather, the reliability of the forecast development of costs should be evaluated at short intervals as long as relevant commitments under the ITER Agreement still exist and before further resources are made available for the project.
3. The Bundesrat takes the view that the EU should withdraw from the funding of the ITER international nuclear fusion research reactor as soon as possible. It asks the Federal Government to bring pressure to bear at EU level and to ensure that the EU calls for the relevant changes to be made to the ITER Agreement and makes immediate efforts to start the relevant negotiations with the contracting parties.

4. The Bundesrat sees an inherent financial risk in the ITER project and the accompanying nuclear fusion research. Substantial additional costs have already arisen compared with the original plans for the ITER project. Further cost increases for nuclear fusion research probably have to be expected. The resources needed to cover the cost of the ITER project should be used for energy research projects which promise to contribute sustainably and in an environmentally sensible manner to the move away from nuclear energy.
5. The financial control of research expenditure in the field of Euratom research, in particular on the ITER project, and the development of fusion energy must be improved with a view to active, i. e. risk-minimising, cost management.
6. The EU research funding freed up could then be used in other fields of research, for example energy storage and the expansion of smart grids under the EU's 'Horizon 2020' programme. This would help to move the transition process forward at EU level.
7. The Bundesrat is forwarding this opinion directly to the Commission.