

Brussels, 29 OCT. 2010  
C/2010/7475

Dear President,

The European Commission thanks the Committee of European Affairs of the Assembly of the Portuguese Republic for its opinion on the "Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council – ITER status and possible way forward" (COM (2010) 226 & SEC (2010) 571) that you submitted on 19 July by letter.

The Commission notes that the Committee largely agrees on the strategic importance of the ITER project and on the need to find appropriate means to cover its current additional financing needs.

Following the publication of the abovementioned Communication, the Competitiveness Council of 26 May 2010 decided the creation of a Task Force on ITER financing. Based on the outcome of the discussions held in the Task Force, the related Council conclusions were adopted on 12 July. Reacting to these conclusions, the Commission adopted on 20 July a "Proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council amending the Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006 on budgetary discipline and sound financial management as regards the multiannual financial framework, to address additional financing needs of the ITER project" (COM (2010) 403).

The opinion of the Committee of European Affairs of the Assembly of the Portuguese Republic underlines a number of key aspects for ensuring the sustainability of the ITER project, both in the short and in the long term.

For the long term, the Commission welcomes the importance paid by this opinion to the need to establish the multiannual financial framework at the level required to ensure that Euratom can honour its responsibilities in the framework of the ITER project without detriment to other EU policies and programmes. For the short term, the Commission shares the concern expressed in the opinion over the negative effects a large redeployment of funds would have over other EU priorities, a concern reflected in the abovementioned proposal adopted on 20 July.

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*Finally, the Commission welcomes the support expressed in this opinion to the changes made in the management of the EU's Domestic Agency, Fusion for Energy (F4E) and to the need to initiate changes in its governance. The Commission will make proposals for such changes soon.*

*In conclusion, the Commission is very grateful for the interest expressed by the Committee of European Affairs of the Assembly of the Portuguese Republic in the ITER project and its financing and looks forward to cooperate further with your Parliament.*

*Yours sincerely,*