European Joint Undertaking for ITER and the Development of Fusion Energy

2018/2222(INI) - 15/01/2019 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 526 votes to 126, with 43 abstentions, a resolution on the European Joint Undertaking for ITER and the Development of Fusion Energy.

Members recalled that fusion could play a key role in the future European and global energy landscape as a potentially inexhaustible, safe, climate-friendly, environmentally responsible and economically competitive source of energy. Europe has from the start played a leading role in the ITER project, developed in close collaboration with the non-European signatories to the ITER Agreement (the US, Russia, Japan, China, South Korea and India), and whereas the European contribution, channelled through the Joint Undertaking, represents 45 % of the construction costs of the project.

Multiannual financial framework 2021-2027

Parliament welcomed the Commission 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, which will provide the basis for the financing of the activities of the Joint Undertaking for the period 2021-2027.

Members regretted, however, the fact that the Council has not consulted Parliament on that proposal and welcomed the Commission's stated intention to consider 'options for enhanced qualified majority voting and for a possible reform of the Euratom Treaty'. It expects that such a reform would necessarily lead to **co-legislative powers** for Parliament.

It recalled the delay in the construction of the experimental reactor which will now not commence until 2025 and stressed that:

- the Euratom contribution to the Joint Undertaking for the period 2021-2027 should not be exceeded;

- in order to avoid successive upward revisions of the projected cost of the project, to avoid delays in the expected dates of operational milestones and to ensure the highest possible degree of schedule reliability, the ITER Organisation should include reasonable contingency provisions in any revised schedule.

Members supported, in this regard, the contingency provisions of up to 24 months in terms of schedule and 10-20 % in terms of budget proposed by the Commission.

Council recommendations

The Council is called on to approve the Commission proposal while introducing the following modifications:

- indicate the Euratom contribution to the Joint Undertaking in both constant and current prices,

- use, for clarity purposes, the word 'Euratom' instead of 'Community' throughout the text,

- include clear provisions regarding the committees assisting the Governing Board of the Joint Undertaking, in particular the Administration and Management Committee, the Procurement and

Contracts Committee, and the Technical Advisory Panel, as regards their composition, permanent or temporary status, number of meetings and method of remuneration of their members,

- evaluate and eliminate overlapping responsibilities between the Administration and Management Committee and the Technical Advisory Panel with regard to project plans and work programmes,

- introduce provisions regarding the contributions of the ITER host state,

- include in Annex III a requirement to lay down, in the Financial Regulation of the Joint Undertaking, rules and procedures for the evaluation of in-kind contributions,

- include provisions in Article 5 and Annex III enabling the Joint Undertaking to receive funding in the form of financial instruments in connection with blending operations implemented in accordance with the future InvestEU Programme,

- clarify the role and contribution of the United Kingdom in the light of its Euratom status, particularly with regard to potential participation in ITER,

- include provisions regarding synergies and cooperation between ITER and the Euratom Research and Training Programme for the period 2021-2025,

- consider cooperation with small and medium-sized private disruptive players, such as start-ups experimenting with new approaches and technologies, in the research programme and the network of organisations designated in the field of scientific and technological fusion research,

- clarify the provisions concerning the annual reports and assessments drawn up by the Joint Undertaking,

- include in the proposal a recommendation to investigate the possible further use of the materials currently being used in the ITER project.