Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ITER HEADQUARTERS INAUGURATED

SAINT-PAUL-LEZ-DURANCE, France. On Thursday 17 January 2013, Günther H. Oettinger, EU Commissioner for Energy, and Geneviève Fioraso, French Minister of Higher Education and Research, inaugurated the new ITER Headquarters building in the presence of 200 guests.

The 20,500-square-metre ITER Headquarters building, seat of the ITER Organization, was inaugurated on Thursday, 17 January 2013 in the presence of elected officials and government representatives; and staff from the ITER Organization, the European Domestic Agency Fusion for Energy and Agence ITER France.

Günther H. Oettinger, EU Commissioner for Energy, and Geneviève Fioraso, French Minister of Higher Education and Research—together with ITER Director-General Osamu Motojima—unveiled the plaque that was created for the entrance of the building. A contribution from Europe and France to the ITER project, the Headquarters building was completed in September and officially handed over to the ITER Organization on 5 October 2012.

EU Energy Commissioner Günther H. Oettinger stated: "*At this time when the urgency to transform our energy system has been overshadowed by the financial crisis, it is important that we keep steadfast in funding projects like ITER, which is at the forefront of energy technology research in the world giving a long-term view towards the decarbonization of our energy supply. ITER, one of the world's biggest scientific collaborations, has a key role to play in establishing fusion as a sustainable energy source. Moreover, it benefits the economy of the countries, especially through the high-tech SME[1] sector. With ITER being located on EU territory we play a key role in global energy technology research now and in the future.*"

French Minister Fioraso underlined the importance of the ITER project: "*For France, ITER represents a unique and outstanding project, the broadest international cooperation for research ever implemented. It addresses key societal challenges to develop a sustainable energy for the future generations. France is honoured to host such an exceptional research infrastructure that will tackle scientific feasibility for fusion and technological challenges, in the frame of a high level international project. France is fully committed to make ITER a success in cooperation with all the ITER Parties.*"

Speaking from the auditorium of the striking Headquarters building, ITER Director-General Motojima stated: "*This is indeed a beautiful and elegant building. These qualities, however, exist to serve one purpose only: this is the place where we are working as hard as possible to make ITER a success [...] In the floors above us, hundreds of physicists, engineers, technicians and administrators are feeding the pulse of one of the largest scientific collaborations of all times – one that could change the course of civilization.*"

Commissioner Oettinger, Minister Fioraso, and Director-General Motojima met with members of the French and European press to answer questions, and visited the ITER construction site where work on the Tokamak Complex—the centre of the future scientific installation—will begin in the coming months.

The ITER Headquarters building was designed by architects Rudy Ricciotti of Marseille and Laurent Bonhomme of Vinon-sur-Verdon, following an architectural competition held in 2007. Construction, which was carried out between August 2010 and September 2012, was overseen by Agence Iter France under delegation from the European Domestic Agency Fusion for Energy. The building hosts approximately 500 staff, as well as a cafeteria, auditorium and meeting rooms for staff members located in other office buildings on the ITER site.

[1] Small and medium enterprises

BACKGROUND TO THE PRESS RELEASE

ITER—designed to demonstrate the scientific and technological feasibility of fusion power—will be the world's largest experimental fusion facility. Fusion is the process which powers the sun and the stars: when light atomic nuclei fuse together to form heavier ones, a large amount of energy is released. Fusion research is aimed at developing a safe, abundant and environmentally responsible energy source.

ITER is also a first-of-a-kind global collaboration. Europe will contribute almost half of the costs of its construction, while the other six Members to this joint international venture (China, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation and the USA), will contribute equally to the rest. The ITER project is under construction in Cadarache, in the south of France.

Photos of the ITER Headquarters inauguration can be downloaded at:
http://www.iter.org/album/newsline/253 inauguration

More information on the ITER project can be found at: http://www.iter.org/