

Commissioner Mr Miguel Arias-Cañete

ITER Industry Day

Monday, 4 December 2017, 08h30-17h30

European Commission, Berlaymont Building

Rue de la Loi, B-1040 Brussels

I. SPEECH

Dear Minister,
Members of the European Parliament,
Excellences,
Industry representatives,
Dear colleagues and friends,

- I am very happy to welcome you on behalf of the European Commission at today's ITER event.
- I am sure you will share my view that ITER is a fascinating project and a crucial one for the **future of energy**.
- Indeed, the aim of this unique endeavour is to develop a new, safe and clean source of energy on Earth, fusion energy. This would be a remarkable gift to the **future generations**.
- ITER undoubtedly plays a great role in **meeting our broader energy and climate policy objectives**.
- As you know, Europe is committed to **decarbonising our economy** – as reflected in our leading role in making the Paris Agreement a reality. As a result, fossil fuels will gradually decrease in our energy mix, to be replaced by alternative sources.

- Fusion is a climate-friendly and sustainable energy source: the fusion reaction does not produce any greenhouse gases or long-lasting radioactivity. It is therefore **part of the solution to reach our Paris commitments**, and could become a suitable complement to renewables.
- Fusion is also extremely promising in fulfilling the other dimensions of our Energy Union: **to make energy secure and affordable for our citizens, while supporting growth and job creation**. A virtually inexhaustible energy source, fusion will make fuel widely available and practically unlimited, therefore ensuring stability for our grids, but also competitiveness for our economy.
- This is the end objective. But there are many more benefits along the journey.
- This is why today, I propose that we keep our feet firmly on the ground. I want to show you that ITER and fusion are not about dreams and science-fiction but about **hard facts, real jobs, concrete technologies, buildings getting off the ground and components being manufactured**.
- It is very important to have these key facts in mind, at a moment when all ITER Members are discussing **the new ITER baseline** and its implications for their participation in the project. As you know, the European Commission has stated very clearly its full support to the continuation of the project through adoption of the Communication on the EU contribution to a reformed ITER project.
- My hope is that today's event will make another important contribution to our ongoing discussion about ITER, with our EU partners, and with international partners to the project.
- I hope to provide **tangible evidence that investing in ITER is a wise business decision** – and as far as Europe is concerned, a smart way to make use of our common budget.
- For my part I will focus on the **3 main following points**:

- Where are we today with ITER?
- What are the next steps of ITER?
- What are the benefits of ITER for the EU economy and society at large?

I- ITER is back on track

- This conference is very timely as 2017 marks the 10th anniversary of the entry into force of the ITER Agreement, the 10th anniversary of the ITER Organization and the 10th anniversary of Fusion for Energy.
- Some of you took part last week in the celebrations in Barcelona. Today is yet another opportunity to mark the first 10 years of the ITER project and of Europe's role in this adventure, to take stock of progress and of challenges ahead.
- I will not surprise you by saying that these 10 ten years have not been easy and we should not pretend that all went according to plan. But we should also be realistic and recognize that no similar first-of-its-kind project can go without a glitch from day one to its completion.
- Indeed, ITER is a complex and challenging project but it is pretty clear that the sky over ITER is much brighter than 3 years ago when I assumed the responsibility for this project as part of my duties as European Commissioner for Energy and Climate Action.
- First, I would like to underline that the new management has put the project on the right track and brought the industry fully on board.
- The last ITER Council brought tangible evidence of the positive turnaround by unveiling that components necessary for the first experiments scheduled in 2025 (First Plasma) are already completed at 61% and construction work at 49%. On

site the **progress is visible and substantial**. If you have not recently been there, I strongly advise you to visit the project in Cadarache and see for yourself.

II- ITER: the way forward

- Recognising these positive changes, a **new baseline - including a more realistic schedule and cost estimates**, while maintaining the same scope and final goal - has been approved at the ITER Council meeting in November 2016.
- This is of course, pending approval of the budgetary authorities of the respective ITER Members. In this respect, I am very pleased to hear that most Members to the project are **reporting important progress in their domestic ratification processes**.
- As far as Europe is concerned, I am glad that the Commission has been at the forefront of these efforts through **the adoption of its Communication on ITER** last June. This political document, addressed to the European Member States and the European Parliament is a reconfirmation of our trust in the project, thanks to the positive impact of changes in the project management.
- It is now the time for the **European Parliament and the Council of the Ministers** of the EU to give a clear signal that the EU supports the success of this key endeavour to address Europe's future energy needs.
- An important next step in this process will be the **endorsement of the ITER Communication by the Council of the European Union**, which we hope will take place under Bulgarian Presidency. We are also very attentive to the European Parliament's reaction to this Communication.
- In parallel, we are working at all levels to ensure continued political support of our international partners.

III- Benefits for the economy and society at large

- This is crucial because ITER is not just pushing technology to its limits but it is already bringing a lot of concrete effects for the economy and society at large.
- Participation in ITER brings multiple benefits, synergies and cross-cutting effects to European industry and research communities, not least through entering new markets and developing international cooperation.
- With the largest superconducting magnets of the world, the biggest cryogenic plant and similar other unique components, ITER is already at the current stage one of the most fascinating scientific and technology endeavours of our times.
- Probably the most international too, with seven international partners, representing 85% of the world's total GDP and also half of the world's population, these international partners are combining their resources, scientific expertise and industrial know-how in order to work closely together.
- Let me just share with you some data at our disposal. Over the last ten years, Fusion for Energy has directly awarded almost 1000 contracts and grants for a value of approximately EUR 4 billion spread all over Europe.
- Some 300 companies including SMEs from about 20 different EU Member States and Switzerland, as well as some 60 research organisations, engaged in cutting-edge Research and Development, technology, design and manufacture work have benefited from this investment in ITER.
- As a result, ITER has already created 3,000 direct jobs on the site of Cadarache. And of course there are also many indirect jobs involved.

- But ITER is **not just the European contribution** to the project. It is also the contribution of the other 6 members that are **procuring all around the world** the high-tech components needed to complete this device.
- Thanks to this international participation, many European industries are establishing solid international cooperation and **participating in international markets**; opening new business opportunities and synergies related to ITER activities and beyond. The result of this cooperation is the creation and sharing of new know-how that is being created all over the world.
- The benefits of ITER expand **way beyond the broader energy sector**: industry participating in the project develops 'spin off' products for exploitation outside fusion, for example in aviation and hi-tech instruments like the nuclear magnetic resonance scanners used in the health sector.
- In one word, ITER is fully contributing to **the agenda for jobs, growth and investment** which is at the core of the political priorities of the Juncker Commission.

Conclusion:

- The EU has shown **leadership** to address the challenges of ITER and to put the project back on track. The radical measures adopted in particular since 2015 are now yielding encouraging results.
- As a result, ITER is not only an innovative and strategic project for the future, but it is already having **a major impact on the industrial development** for Europe and worldwide, beyond the strategic role for the EU energy policy.
- I want to confirm here our **commitment** to ITER and the development of fusion as the host ITER Member.

- With the support of the EU Member States and of the European Parliament, but also with the broader support for the other ITER Members, we will do what is needed to **keep the project on track** and make progress towards our common objective and our common vision.
- Science and technology require us to constantly question our actions, to ask ourselves if the roads we are taking are the correct ones, if the decisions adopted are successful and the results those that we expected.
- And surely enough, the future will continue to be full of challenges: technological, scientific, financial ones. But I am sure that **fruitful cooperation at political, scientific and industrial level** will make these challenges become achievements and the doubts turn into certainties.
- I thank you for your attention and wish you successful exchanges during today's event.