Drumbeat for ITER Assembly

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On Tuesday 28 July, the ITER project officially starts the phase of assembly. It's a key moment in the history of the biggest fusion experiment which has received the support of seven international parties representing half of the world's population and 80% of the global GDP. Never before have the stakes been so high and the political wind so strong to explore the potential of this <u>new, abundant, safe and sustainable energy source</u>. The search of clean fuels and the incentives to unleash Europe's innovation potential are central to the EU's policy agenda. The <u>recent EU budget agreement</u> securing 5 billion EUR for the next seven years underlines the political will at the highest level.

Europe is the host of the prestigious project counting with a contribution of approximately 45%. F4E is the sole party responsible for the construction of the buildings, the infrastructure and power supplies on-site. But it also has the lion's share of the components that make up the most advanced fusion device. Since 2008, F4E has signed 833 contracts for a value of at least 4.4 billion EUR with more than 550 companies, their 1800 subcontractors and at least 70 R&D organisations. "We're in this together" is the spirit of Europe's involvement ensuring that industry, smaller companies and laboratories become familiar with ITER. Being part of the learning curve is the way to acquire the necessary expertise for the commercial fusion devices of tomorrow.

So how did we get to the phase of assembly? From the moment the French state handed over the land that will host ITER, Europe transformed the landscape and started erecting the buildings and facilities of the project. In March, <u>F4E and its contractors made the pit of the Tokamak building, "the home" of the device, accessible</u> to all ITER parties to start installing their components. The impressive lower part of the cryostat, provided by India, is already in place.

Various pieces of equipment have already been delivered from the ITER parties: transformers and power suppliers, the <u>first Toroidal Field coils from Europe</u> and Japan, <u>Europe's first Poloidal Field coil</u> jointly manufactured with China, and the first sector of the vacuum vessel, produced by Korea, is on its way. <u>The massive pieces of the biggest</u> <u>technology puzzle have started coming together.</u> Getting there was no easy task. The project had to revise its schedule, revisit its manufacturing strategy and shake its philosophy of management. The efforts and determination of all parties to keep going has paid off. To celebrate this important achievement, the President of the French Republic will be joined by other government personalities to mark this significant moment. A dedicated <u>website</u> has more details about the event. If you would like to follow live the ceremony click <u>here</u>.