

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As EPP shadow rapporteur on ITER, there are five points that I should like to stress in particular:

Firstly, ITER is the largest international cooperation project led by Europe involving research centers and universities, with great importance for the development of scientific research.

Secondly, the conclusions of the Council are in line with the amounts proposed by the Commission of EUR 2.707 million for the ITER programme. However, I draw your attention to the commitment of 4 billion Euros foreseen in international contracts that we are obliged to pay. This information was confirmed by the legal services and the European Commission.

Thirdly, I understand that the rapporteur reflects in his opinion the position of MFF Interim Report in placing ITER over and above the ceilings of the MFF so as to ensure adequate funding for this project while at the same time protecting other EU programmes, mainly in the research field, from possible redeployments in favour of ITER. However, this is depending on future negotiations on MFF.

Fourthly, I call your attention to the various problems in the past in terms of management. It is important to ensure sound financial management in order to avoid cost overruns in the future.

Finally, the European Parliament has an important role to play by supervising and controlling the development of the programme.