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## European Parliament Approves Iter Accounts After Delay

28 Oct (NucNet) : The European Parliament has approved Fusion for Energy's (F4E) accounts for the 2014 financial year following a delay while decisions were being made on a revised schedule for the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (Iter) project under construction in southern France. F4E, the EU agency providing the European contribution to the project, said in a statement that the accounts were approved on 27 October 2016 with **436 in favour, 170 against and 18 abstentions**. "With this decision, the European Parliament has recognised the significant efforts and improvements which have been made in the last period in the Iter project," F4E said. The continued support of the European Parliament is crucial to the success of Europe's efforts in bringing the Iter project "back on track", F4E said. **F4E gave no details in its statement on the budget for Iter, but the total cost of the project has previously been estimated at €15bn (about \$16bn). The European Parliament has the final say on approving the way EU bodies spend money from the EU budget.** In the annual "discharge" procedure, it verifies whether EU funds were spent according to the rules. It may grant, postpone or refuse to grant a discharge, which is required for the formal closure of institutional accounts. On 28 April 2016, the European Parliament postponed the discharge for F4E's 2014 annual accounts pending information on a revised schedule and cost estimate for the Iter project. The postponement did not call into question the management of EU funds by F4E, but was instead "a request for more solid information on the overall cost and timeframe of the project", F4E said. At a meeting on 16 of June 2016, the Iter Council, made up of representatives of the seven Iter parties, endorsed an updated schedule which identifies **the date of first plasma as December 2025, about five years later than originally planned**. F4E said Iter is a complex international project and requires adjustments in terms of budget and planning common to such large-scale projects. "All seven Iter parties, and Europe in particular, are conscious of these challenges and have taken significant steps to dramatically improve the way the project is being managed," F4E said. The seven Iter parties are the EU, the US, China, India, Japan, Russia and South Korea. Iter will be the world's largest experimental fusion facility and is designed to demonstrate the scientific and technological feasibility of fusion, the process which powers the sun and the stars. Fusion research is aimed at developing a safe, limitless and environmentally responsible energy source.

