



Unfair competition for hosting the European Spallation Source

Statement by the ESS Hungary National Council

Budapest, 8th June 2009 - Sweden misleads the public and tries to discredit the other two bidders: no official decision has been made on siting the more than 1 billion Euro European neutron scattering centre (ESS) investment. An announcement placed on the ESS Scandinavia website which declares that the Swedish Lund will host ESS ruins the reputation of the other two competitors – Bilbao and Debrecen- by ignoring the European rules. The latest news about talks between Spain and Sweden is not changing the fact, that also Spain was one of the participants who sharply protested against the unfair procedure. The ESS Hungary National Council requests the countries that participate in the decision making and the Czech presidency to ensure a transparent procedure which is in line with values and ethics of the EU and helps to find a scientifically excellent and cost-efficient solution for the benefit of European science, economic competitiveness and tax payers. On Friday, May 29, on the ESS Scandinavia website an announcement was published which claims that at an informal dinner of some European research ministry representatives on Thursday, May 28, a decision was reached on siting ESS (European Spallation Source) one of the world's biggest scientific investments in the Swedish Lund. ESS Hungary National Council would like to emphasize that **a serious and politically binding decision on siting of ESS can be made only by those who have proved a serious and substantial commitment** in its realisation. If Europe is serious about building ESS, not the number of countries expressing sympathies for one or the other candidate should matter, but the overall size of transparently documented governmental commitments covering the cost of ESS at one or at the other site. This has been agreed and documented as one of the basic guiding principles of a responsible site decision in the first ESS gathering chaired by the Czech Republic on May 4, in Prague. Anyone who communicates any different would either like to mislead the public or to gain unfair advantage in the competition.

Europe's research and development capabilities and competitiveness are determined by how the centrally financed major scientific infrastructures can be linked to the knowledge evenly spread in the territory of the EU. This is especially important when the free circulation of knowledge became the fifth human right of the EU. Currently all major research infrastructures operate and are located west of the river Elbe. It is all members' interest to change this. All the projected almost 100 research infrastructures on the list of the European basic research (ESFRI) and the European energy research (SET-P) cost hundreds of millions of Euro each and are realized with the scientific and financial support of several but not all member states. ESS is the first on the list amongst these infrastructures and as such it is crucial to obtain a final decision in the spirit of European standards which sets a precedent for the future as well. Scientific excellence, cost efficiency and the principle of a balanced

geographical division of scientific infrastructures in Europe have to be taken into consideration when making the final decision.

ESS Hungary National Council strongly believes that the Hungarian proposal meets all the principles. A broad national consensus was born in the spirit of this. This is why we supported our government to reach cooperation with the neighbouring and other countries for siting ESS in Debrecen. We expect the same attitude from the governments of all the effected states. ESS Hungary National Council asks European decision makers – President José Manuel Barroso, Commissioner for Science and Research Janez Potocnik and the currently presiding Czech Republic - to ensure a fair and transparent procedure which is line with the European spirit and standards, the enforcement of the three fundamental principles. We find scandalous and **must protest if anyone suggests that in the EU a decision on a 1 billion Euro investment which influences the competitiveness of the whole economic region for decades will be made without a sorrow professional preparation, and clear governmental/political commitments behind.** The competition is not yet finished, and for this reason we fully support the government of the Republic of Hungary to keep consistently standing for the Hungarian and -at the same time- European interest, for hosting ESS in Debrecen.

Board of ESS Hungary National Council

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