

JRC starts the construction of the science pole

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It will be the core of research, the future of the Joint Research Centre (JRC). A new science centre is going to be built in the JRC, in Ispra, where scientists will be able to work side by side, exchanging ideas and developing innovations. This morning, Dolf Van Hattem, Unit Head, signed the contract for the construction of two of the four new buildings scheduled in the Strategic Develop Plan. The construction has been given to the Italian companies Arcas and Intertecno. For the JRC, this is a very important step, possibly the most important in the last few decades. The architect, Alejandro Massaro Lattuada, who is responsible for the construction phases, explained, "The original building was too wasteful; it was planned for the nuclear intentions in this area. The site consists of lots of small buildings, designed also to be able to deal with danger situations, where the separation would help to protect the various activities."

Today, nuclear power for the site near Varese is just a thing of the past; the future is focusing everything on research, which is being done in many fields in the JRC, for example, the study of seismic phenomena, of air pollution and of the electronic passport. "The two buildings will be dedicated to environmental studies, ranging from climate change to the study of the soil, and life sciences, ranging from biotechnologies to consumer protection. The buildings will house both offices and laboratories, covering an area of 12,000m² and will be completed by the end of 2012," said Massaro.

The results of studies carried out in the JRC are essential for the European Union as they provide the grounds for decisions affecting the whole of Europe, for example, the standards on reducing vehicle pollution. This explains, in part, the choice of the European Parliament and Council to approve the funding of the work to the tune of approximately €44 million. "Obtaining the go ahead and the allocation of funds was a crowning moment for our centre," said Van Hattem. "This is the beginning of the first phase of the strategic plan, which will lead to the building of what will become the heart of the JRC. The goal is to create an environment where the scientists can work closely together, in a stimulating and constructive atmosphere. This will allow increasing efficiency. I think this is money extremely well spent."

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