FAIR particle accelerator kick-off event

November 7 2007

Nuclear physicists from around the world are today celebrating the official launch of the particle accelerator FAIR with a gala event and a scientific symposium. The Facility for Antiproton and Ion Research is being set up on the grounds of the Gesellschaft fur Schwerionenforschung in Darmstadt. The heavy ion research institute is part of the Helmholtz Association.

“Fifteen countries are now involved in this unique project,” says Prof. Jürgen Mlynek, President of the Helmholtz Association. FAIR will eventually cost around €1.2 billion, 75 percent of which will be covered by Germany, the rest being contributed by the other participating countries.

“FAIR is intended to answer some very fundamental questions of physics that up to now have been impossible to investigate experimentally,” Mlynek explains. Why protons weigh more than the three quarks they consist of, for example, is a mystery. And the powerful force that binds together the particles in the nucleus of an atom can also be examined more closely in experiments at FAIR. These will enable physicists to understand how atoms and heavy elements formed to create matter following the big bang.

From this afternoon you can access a podcast on FAIR and an interview with its project director, Prof. Hans Gutbrod, in German and English at: www.helmholtz.de/de/Aktuelles/Helmholtz-Audio.html

More detailed information is available at: www.gsi.de/fair/index.html

Source: Helmholtz Association of German Research Centres

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