

# EU to test nuclear plants' safety after bargaining

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The nuclear power plant Isar 1 in Markt Essenbach, near Landshut, southern Germany, is pictured in March 2011. The European Union's energy chief said Wednesday he was satisfied with a deal to conduct EU-wide safety checks on nuclear plants even though tests on terror attacks were left for another day.

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Seeking to ease [public concerns](#) following the March earthquake and tsunami that triggered Japan's [nuclear crisis](#), the European Commission and national atomic watchdogs struck a deal late Tuesday to launch the "stress tests" on June 1.

"In light of the Fukushima (nuclear plant accident in Japan) we thought

it was important to have nuclear stress tests," EU energy commissioner Guenther Oettinger told a news conference.

"I am very satisfied with the progress and I feel that these tests have met the requirements for high objectivity and further in-depth examination," he said.

Austria and Germany, backing Oettinger, wanted [terror attacks](#) to be part of the exercise but they met resistance from France and Britain, which argued that tests with national security implications should stay in national hands and already took account of available evidence.

In a compromise after two months of hard bargaining, EU nuclear regulators agreed tests on the ability of reactors to survive earthquakes, floods or man-made events like plane crashes for now, and proposed forming a working group to deal with terrorism.

Oettinger acknowledged that the EU's executive commission will not have the power to demand a plant's closure in any of the 14 EU states that generate [nuclear energy](#) once results are collated.

"Yes, people are criticising me, Green members of the European Parliament, saying the tests don't live up to expectations," he said.

"At the same time, I'm criticised in other states for getting mixed up in national competences by laying down criteria. If everybody's criticising you it means you're doing well," the German commissioner added.

The EU Parliament's Green group said that "despite the repeated assurances of commissioner Oettinger, it seems that the [nuclear industry](#) will get a stress-free ride under the proposed EU nuclear safety tests."

"Serious and binding [stress tests](#), worthy of the name, would assess not

only the risk of terrorist attacks but also technical problems caused through disruption of operation or the ageing of nuclear reactors," said Greens co-president Rebecca Harms.

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