

Deal finally struck on stress tests for Europe's reactors

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The nuclear power plant Isar 1 in Markt Essenbach, near Landshut, southern Germany, is pictured in March 2011. European nations Tuesday finally struck a deal on stress tests to be carried out from next month on the continent's reactors, EU diplomats and European Commission sources said.

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In the wake of Japan's [nuclear disaster](#), countries have been pressing for stress tests on the 143 [nuclear power plants](#) in service across the European Union.

But the EU was split over whether to include the threat of terror attacks or other man-made disasters.

Under the deal, tests will be divided into two categories -- safety tests to see whether plants can survive ageing, [natural disasters](#) and human factors, and security tests that will include terror attacks and malevolence, including air crashes, the sources told AFP.

The agreement follows talks by national nuclear safety regulators to find a joint response to safety fears in the wake of events in Japan.

EU energy commissioner Guenther Oettinger wanted stringent and exhaustive checks to take into account human factors, cyber attacks and plane crashes.

"The public expects credible [stress tests](#) covering a wide range of risks and safety issues," he said earlier this month. "This is what we are working on."

But he faced the all-powerful nuclear lobby in France and Britain, with London in particular resisting pressure to design far-reaching simulations including [terror attacks](#), sources said.

Paris and London between them control more than half the power plants in service in the EU, where 14 of the 27 nuclear states have nuclear generators.

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