

Romania, EU launch works on world's most powerful laser

June 14 2013



European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso (R) and EU commissioner for Regional Policy Johannes Hahn talk at the European Parliament in Strasbourg on January 15, 2013. The European Union and Romania laid Friday the cornerstone of a research hub due to host the world's most powerful laser.

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"The project is of particular importance not only for Romania and also for Europe as a whole.," European commissioner for regional policy Johannes Hahn told a press conference alongside Romania's Prime Minister Victor Ponta.

"Its cutting-edge technology will be used by researchers all over the world," he added.

Known as "Extreme Light Infrastructure - Nuclear Physics" (ELI-NP), it will serve as a pan-European laboratory and host a broad range of scientific disciplines including [fundamental physics](#), new [nuclear physics](#) and astrophysics but also life sciences.

ELI-NP, the most important research project in the newer EU member states, will create jobs and "turn brain-drain into brain circulation" in the region, Hahn stressed.

"It is for the first time that structural funds will finance a basic [research infrastructure](#) project," he added, stressing that the EU earmarked 150 million euros (\$199.9 million) for it.

Some 40 academic and [research institutions](#) from 13 EU countries are involved in the programme which includes two other pillars, in the Czech Republic and Hungary.

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