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Italy bids to host headquarters of global radio telescope

Source: Xinhua [07:55 April 01 2010]

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The Italian government launched Rome's candidature to host the central coordinating headquarters of the Square Kilometer Array (SKA) global project, set to become the world's most powerful radio telescope in universe exploration, said a statement released on Wednesday.

Junior Economic Development Minister Adolfo Urso said Italy's leading engineering and industrial groups were front-runners in the candidature and had the right competence and know-how to build the SKA control center.

Rome's application is strategic, given that the SKA has been lauded as one of the world's most important science projects of the 21st century. Were Rome to win the bid, this would translate into major investment flows, creation of new jobs and a global reputation gain.

Italy's capital has already identified the ideal location for the monitoring headquarters: the Tiburtina Valley in the southern outskirts of the city, where leading high-tech and scientific firms are located.

Rome Mayor Gianni Alemanno praised the government's application, saying Rome had the right place, qualities and capacities to coordinate the global project, according to a statement issued by the City Hall municipality.

"If our bid will be accepted, the capital would benefit both in terms of advanced research and job occupation," he observed.

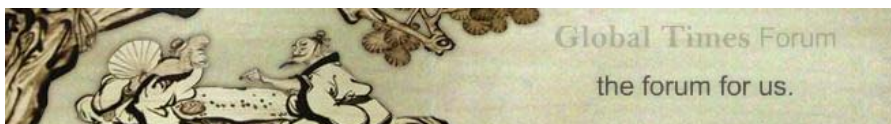
The SKA is a strategic 1.5-billion-US-dollar project which could one day help unlock the secrets of the universe, led by a consortium of 19 countries.

The SKA, 50 times more sensitive than any other radio instrument, will be built in the southern hemisphere. The possible hosting-site countries for the telescope, whose construction is set to begin in 2013, are South Africa and Australia.

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