



EUROPEAN UNION

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Statement on Iran by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on behalf of the E3/EU+3

Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission, issued the following statement today:

“Today, I met with the Political Directors of China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States in order to assess the situation concerning the Iranian nuclear issue. We reaffirmed our determination and commitment to seek a diplomatic solution to this issue and focused our discussion on further practical steps to achieve it at an early date.

We discussed the recent developments of the Iranian nuclear programme as reflected in the latest IAEA report. In particular, we noted with grave concern Iran’s installation of centrifuges in its facility near Qom as part of plans to increase the capacity to enrich uranium to near 20% and the IAEA’s increasing concern about the possible military dimensions to Iran’s nuclear programme.

We remain determined and united in our efforts to work towards a comprehensive, negotiated, long-term solution – involving the full implementation by Iran of UNSC and IAEA Board of Governors Resolutions - which restores international confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran’s nuclear programme, while respecting Iran’s legitimate right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy consistent with the NPT. In this regard, we reaffirmed the need for Iran to co-operate fully with the IAEA and to satisfactorily address all its concerns, including those on possible military dimensions to its nuclear programme, as reflected in IAEA reports.

For this purpose, over the past year we have made concrete and practical proposals for initial confidence building measures to Iran. We deeply regret that Iran has failed to respond in kind.

P R E S S

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We reaffirm our offer of June 2008 and the proposals we made to Iran in Istanbul in January. We are ready to engage with Iran in a constructive dialogue on the basis of reciprocity and a step-by-step approach and we look to Iran to make clear that it is prepared to engage in the same spirit, in particular by demonstrating willingness to address the international community's concerns about its nuclear programme, without preconditions.

We reaffirm our unity of purpose and collective determination through joint diplomatic efforts based on these principles and in the context of our double-track strategy to resolve our shared concerns about Iran's nuclear programme. Against that background we will continue to evaluate situation.

In this context, if Iran is prepared to engage more seriously in concrete discussions aimed at resolving international concerns about its nuclear program, we would be willing to agree on a next meeting with the Iranian side at an early and mutually convenient date and venue."
