

To: Josep Borrell
High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission

Cc: Stefano Sannino
Enrique Mora
Bruno Scholl
Rafael Daerr

Brussels, 31 March 2021

Dear High Representative/Vice-President,

We are gravely concerned about the fate of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The sanctions imposed by the President Donald Trump are still being enforced, including the secondary ones that impact the EU's legitimate trade with Iran and subject the Iranian society to collective economic punishment.

Iran, meanwhile, is in a breach of its own commitments. With both United States and Iran stuck in an impasse over who takes the first step towards the restoration of the JCPOA, the presidential elections are approaching in Iran. This will further reduce the domestic room for maneuver for the outgoing Hassan Rouhani administration.

There is still a narrow window of opportunity to avoid a final collapse of the JCPOA provided by the temporary agreement the IAEA reached with Iran to continue monitoring its nuclear program. Urgent action is needed to seize on it to bring both U.S. and Iran back to a full compliance with the agreement.

We are aware of and appreciate your efforts in this direction. In this sense, we would like to propose for your consideration concrete steps that hopefully could contribute to the resolution of the current deadlock.

First, it is our belief that the U.S., as a side that withdrew from the agreement, should send an unequivocal message of its commitment to rejoin it. That should include the following steps: elimination in practice of the unilateral secondary sanctions that hamper the EU's ability to conduct legitimate trade with Iran; elimination of the sanctions that impact negatively on the public health situation in Iran, particularly taking into account the COVID-19; facilitate the release of the frozen Iranian assets abroad.

In exchange, the Iranian side should be persuaded to freeze the number of centrifuges, stop increasing the level of the enrichment of uranium and agree with the IAEA on relevant steps

leading to the restored implementation of the Additional Protocol to the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

If the U.S. takes the steps described above, and Iran does not reciprocate, the U.S. can, of course, reverse those steps at any time.

In parallel, other countries in the Middle East, such as Israel and Saudi Arabia, should be reassured that restoring the JCPOA would create a foundation for broad and inclusive regional security talks. By contrast, the collapse of the JCPOA would evidently be detrimental to the regional security and stability.

These are tangible, realistic steps forward that could unblock the current situation and create conditions for a full revival of the JCPOA. We believe that the EU, under your leadership, is well positioned to communicate with all sides to proceed along this path.

We hope that our proposals would be considered in the context of your efforts to save the JCPOA. We use this opportunity to reiterate, in line with the positions consistently taken by the European Parliament, our full backing for those efforts and availability for any support you might require in this regard.

Ernest Urtasun
Standing Rapporteur on Iran

Cornelia Ernst
Chair of the Delegation for Relations
with the Islamic Republic of Iran