

STATEMENT BY HIGH REPRESENTATIVE/VICE-PRESIDENT CATHERINE ASHTON ON BEHALF OF E3+3 FOLLOWING TALKS WITH IRAN IN MOSCOW, 18-19 JUNE 2012

I would like to start by thanking the Russian government for hosting the talks and, especially Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov for his personal involvement in this process.

As in Istanbul and Baghdad, the E3+3 remain absolutely unified in seeking a swift diplomatic resolution to international concerns regarding Iran's nuclear programme, based on the NPT and the full implementation by Iran of UNSC and IAEA Board of Governors Resolutions.

The E3+3 reiterated a balanced proposal set out in Baghdad, stopping 20 percent enrichment activities, shutting the Fordow nuclear facility and shipping out stockpiled 20 percent enriched nuclear materials, as well as the reciprocal steps that we are willing to take as a first confidence-building measure. We came prepared to make progress and respond to concrete action by Iran.

Iran responded to the elements of the E3+3 proposal put forward in Baghdad. In turn, the E3+3 provided a thorough and comprehensive response to the issues raised by Iran.

We set out our respective positions in what were detailed, tough and frank exchanges. After five plenary sessions and several bilateral meetings we have begun to tackle the critical issues. However, it remains clear that there are significant gaps between the substance of the two positions.

We have therefore agreed as follows:

- An early follow-on technical-level meeting in Istanbul on 3 July to provide further clarification about the E3+ 3 proposal; increase the E3+3 understanding of the Iranian response; and study the issues raised by Iran during the sessions;
- This will be followed by contact at the deputy-level between Ms. Schmid and Dr. Bagheri;
- I will then be directly in touch with Dr. Jalili about prospects for a future meeting at the political level.

The choice is Iran's. We expect Iran to decide whether it is willing to make diplomacy work, to focus on reaching agreement on concrete confidence-building steps, and to address the concerns of the international community.

The statement and further audio-visual material available at Europe by Satellite (<http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/ebs>).