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Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton following the E3+3 talks with Iran, Almaty, 27 February 2013

The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission issued the following statement today:

"The main result of today is that we have agreed to have a meeting between technical experts in Istanbul in March. This is important, because this is an opportunity for the Iranians to examine in detail with their technical people the proposal we put on the table. And then we also agreed to meet again at the political level back in Almaty in early April.

We put what we call a confidence building proposal on the table. This is an opportunity for Iran to take some initial steps that would improve the confidence of the international community in the wholly peaceful nature of their nuclear programme, in return for which we would do some things as well. That could then lead us on to being able to move forward with substantial talks. Our hope and ambition is to see some tangible results and that Iran will pick this proposal up.

The feeling in Almaty today is that we have a process to now examine this proposal. But the real optimism will come when we start to see progress really being made. And that means our aspiration to see Iran move forward to pick up this proposal, to agree to it and to undertake to implement their part of it. That will be real progress and that will be real cause for optimism.

We laid out our proposals I described in detail in our first plenary session, and pointed out that there were of course some technical issues that would need to be discussed, which lay beneath it.

Now the situation is that, once those technical details have been understood fully and discussed between experts, then it would be for Iran to give us their response to the proposals. And that will take place during the next political meeting, where of course it will be about trying to reach those tangible results for the future."

P R E S S

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