

EU urged to uphold Iran nuclear deal as Trump pulls out

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News

EU political leaders and MEPs says they are dismayed at the US decision to pull out of the Iran nuclear agreement.



Donald Trump | *Photo credit: Press Association*

On Tuesday, President Donald Trump said the US will withdraw from a 2015 international agreement designed to deny Tehran the ability to build nuclear weapons and the enrichment of uranium and plutonium.

The international agreement, formally known as the joint comprehensive plan of action (JCPOA), is aimed at stopping Iran from obtaining a nuclear bomb and President Trump said he would reimpose economic sanctions on Tehran immediately.

The 2015 deal - worked out between Iran and the United States, France, Germany, the UK, the EU,

China, and Russia - eased sanctions on Iran in exchange for Tehran limiting its nuclear programme.

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The decision marks a bitter defeat for Washington's European allies, who have spent months beseeching President Trump to stay in a deal that he has denounced as "insane".

Critics warned it would further endanger stability in the Middle East and have repercussions for big companies doing business with Iran following the 2015 accord.

Ahead of the announcement, senior officials from France, Germany, the UK and EU met Abbas Araghchi, Iran's deputy foreign minister, in Brussels on Tuesday for talks on how to save the deal.

Federica Mogherini, the EU's foreign policy chief, said the EU regretted the US decision but was "determined to preserve" the deal as long as Iran remained compliant. She said she was "particularly worried" by the announcement of new sanctions and would consult on their potential impact.

The Italian official said, "As we have always said, the nuclear deal is not a bilateral agreement. And it's not in the hands of any single country to terminate it unilaterally."

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She added, "The nuclear deal with Iran is crucial for the security of the region, of Europe and of the entire world."

Member state leaders issued a statement expressing "concern" and saying they regretted the decision to exit from the JCPOA.

Signed by the leaders of France, Germany and the UK, it reads, "Together, we emphasise our continuing commitment to the JCPOA. This agreement remains important for our shared security. We recall that the JCPOA was unanimously endorsed by the UN Security Council in resolution 2231. This resolution remains the binding international legal framework for the resolution of the dispute about the Iranian nuclear programme.

"We urge all sides to remain committed to its full implementation and to act in a spirit of responsibility."

It goes on, "The world is a safer place as a result. Therefore we, the E3, will remain parties to the JCPOA. Our governments remain committed to ensuring the agreement is upheld, and will work with all the remaining parties to the deal to ensure this remains the case including through ensuring the continuing economic benefits to the Iranian people that are linked to the agreement.

“The JCPOA is the culmination of 12 years of diplomacy which has been working and delivering on its main goal. The EU is determined to work with the international community to preserve it” **Donald Tusk**

“We urge the US to ensure that the structures of the JCPOA can remain intact, and to avoid taking action which obstructs its full implementation by all other parties to the deal. After engaging with the US administration in a thorough manner over the past months, we call on the US to do everything possible to preserve the gains for nuclear non-proliferation brought about by the JCPOA, by allowing for a continued enforcement of its main elements.

“We encourage Iran to show restraint in response to the decision by the US; Iran must continue to meet its own obligations under the deal, cooperating fully and in a timely manner with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspection requirements.

“The IAEA must be able to continue to carry out its long-term verification and monitoring programme without restriction or hindrance. In turn, Iran should continue to receive the sanctions relief it is entitled to whilst it remains in compliance with the terms of the deal.”

The statement continues, “There must be no doubt: Iran’s nuclear program must always remain peaceful and civilian. While taking the JCPOA as a base, we also agree that other major issues of concern need to be addressed.

“A long-term framework for Iran’s nuclear programme after some of the provisions of the JCPOA expire, after 2025, will have to be defined. Because our commitment to the security of our allies and partners in the region is unwavering, we must also address in a meaningful way shared concerns about Iran’s ballistic missile programme and its destabilising regional activities, especially in Syria, Iraq and Yemen.

“President Trump’s decision is reckless and dangerous, undermining the whole international regime against nuclear proliferation” **Udo Bullmann MEP**

“We have already started constructive and mutually beneficial discussions on these issues, and the E3 is committed to continuing them with key partners and concerned states across the region.”

It concludes, “We and our foreign ministers will reach out to all parties to the JCPOA to seek a positive way forward.”

European Council President Donald Tusk issued a statement saying the EU regretted Trump’s decision. He argued that the lifting of sanctions has had a positive impact on trade and economic relations with Iran. “The JCPOA is the culmination of 12 years of diplomacy which has been working and delivering on its main goal. The EU is determined to work with the international community to preserve it.”

Manfred Weber, leader of Parliament’s EPP group, called Trump’s decision to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal “a strategic mistake”.

He added, “Europe stands for diplomacy and treaties, and against escalation. We will continue our balanced approach with Iran without turning a blind eye to the issues that remain problematic.”

“Trump’s withdrawal from the Iran deal is deeply worrying and trashes over a decade of diplomatic work aimed at preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons across the Middle East. The EU must now show political leadership and work with others to preserve the deal” **Guy Verhofstadt MEP**

His S&D group counterpart, Udo Bullmann, said, “President Trump’s decision is reckless and dangerous, undermining the whole international regime against nuclear proliferation. Therefore, we call on all EU member states to stand united in preserving the Iran nuclear deal, even after US withdrawal.

“President Trump clearly showed he has no interest or will to reach a mutually acceptable compromise with the EU. The EU now needs to preserve tangible economic benefits to Iran that are an essential part of the agreement, in order to ensure that Iran remains a part of the JCPOA. Preserving the Iran nuclear deal is essential to world peace and security. Irresponsibly tearing it apart increases the chances of a new war in the Middle East.”

ALDE group Chair Guy Verhofstadt said, “Trump’s withdrawal from the Iran deal is deeply worrying and trashes over a decade of diplomatic work aimed at preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons across the Middle East. The EU must now show political leadership and work with others to preserve the deal.”

Ska Keller, co-leader of the Greens/EFA group, said, “Donald Trump’s solo run is a dangerous game with fire. The agreement with Iran reduces the risk of nuclear conflict in the unstable region.

This unilateral withdrawal is irresponsible and fuels the risk of a nuclear arms race.

“The European Union must take the initiative to maintain the agreement so that Iran fulfils its commitments under the Iran deal. Economic gains are an incentive for Iran to suspend the nuclear programme, with economic sanctions the deal does not work out anymore.”

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