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Iran-Sanctions

Europe needs to look beyond the nuclear issue

In addition to the sanctions adopted last week by the UN against Iran, European leaders have today agreed on further sanctions. Explaining the decision, Green MEP **Barbara Lochbihler**, chair of the European Parliament delegation for relations with Iran, said:

"The sanctions adopted today by European leaders are aimed at the Iranian leadership, and are a necessary expression of our concerns and collective will. These are "smart sanctions" aimed at the assets of the Revolutionary Guards, and are designed to make life more difficult for the Iranian military apparatus, not the people, thereby increasing their desire for a settlement of the nuclear issue. They are not a panacea and should only be seen as a means of diplomacy."

It is necessary that the EU holds the door open for negotiations. An exclusive focus on sanctions can not force change in Iranian policy. Europe needs to now look beyond the nuclear issue. We must explore possibilities for cooperation in other fields in which Iran and the EU have a mutual interest. As priorities, the stabilization of Afghanistan and Iraq have been mentioned.

Even a limited form of cooperation could produce a necessary minimum level of confidence, something which has suffered in recent years due to the nuclear issue. Europe above all must not forget the lessons of the Cold War. Confidence-building measures, no matter how small, and in particular in times of political confrontation, can have a positive effect and lead to a more general decrease in tensions."

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