

Iran announces deadline for Europe to salvage nuclear deal

Tehran says EU mechanisms must be in place before US sanctions take effect.



Miguel Arias Canete (L), European Union Energy Commissioner, during a meeting with Iranian officials in the capital Tehran on May 19, 2018. Iran said it would wait to see whether Europe produces tangible results in overcoming US sanctions before deciding whether to stay in the nuclear deal, as a top EU official visited Tehran to present plans to maintain trade ties. AFP / STR

Iran has announced the new deadline it expects European nations to meet if they are to uphold the nuclear agreement and salvage it after US President Donald Trump's withdrawal from the pact between Tehran and world powers earlier this month.

"The EU's adopted mechanisms...should be enforced by August 8, when U.S. sanctions begin to take effect," Iranian TV quoted Behrouz Kamalvandi, spokesman for Iran's Atomic Energy Organization, as saying.

The European Union has moved to reassure Iran that it remains committed to upholding the nuclear pact that traded limits on its nuclear programme in return for the lifting of crippling international sanctions on the Iranian economy.

EU energy chief Miguel Arias Canete delivered the message on a visit to Tehran and also said the 28-nation EU, once the biggest importer of Iranian oil, hoped to strengthen trade with Iran.

"We have sent a message to our Iranian friends that as long as they are sticking to the (nuclear) agreement the Europeans will...fulfill their commitment. And they said the same thing on the other side," Mr Arias Canete, European Commissioner for energy and climate, told reporters after talks with Iran's nuclear chief Ali Akbar Salehi.

Mr Salehi said it would be disastrous if EU efforts fail to preserve the 2015 deal, in which Tehran agreed to curb its nuclear work in return for the lifting of most Western sanctions. "The ball is in their (EU leaders) court," Mr Salehi said. "We

hope their efforts materialise”.

The European Union took formal steps Friday to shield its firms from US sanctions on Iran as part of efforts to save the international nuclear deal with Tehran.

EU leaders meeting Thursday in Bulgaria gave the European Commission, the bloc’s executive arm, the all-clear amid a deepening rift with Washington.

The commission said Friday it “launched the formal process to activate the blocking statute by updating the list of US sanctions on Iran falling within its scope”.

The commission said it hopes the statute will be in force before August 6 when the first batch of reimposed US sanctions take effect.

The EU promise to Iran has pitted Brussels against Washington after Mr Trump’s withdrawal.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo is to deliver a speech in Washington on Monday in which he will present his “diplomatic road map” for a new “security architecture” for dealing with the Islamic Republic.

The address will focus on the US’ countering of Iran’s nuclear ambitions and its sponsorship of proxy groups across the Middle East, such as Shiite militia Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Shiite Houthi rebels in Yemen and Sunni militant group Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

“Our broad approach now that we’ve been emphasizing is that we need ... a framework that’s going to address the totality of Iran’s threats,” Brian Hook, director of policy planning for the State Department, said on a conference call with reporters Friday.

“This involves a range of things around its nuclear program—missiles, proliferating missiles, and missile technology, its support for terrorists, and its aggressive and violent activities that fuel civil wars in Syria and Yemen”.

Source: <https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/iran-announces-deadline-for-euro>

pe-to-salvage-nuclear-deal-1.731911

[Disclaimer]