

**Question for written answer E-011248/2012  
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)**

Rule 117

**Pino Arlacchi (S&D), María Muñoz De Urquiza (S&D), Alexandra Thein (ALDE), Emilio Menéndez del Valle (S&D), Ivo Vajgl (ALDE) and Oreste Rossi (EFD)**

Subject: VP/HR - EU strategy on the Iranian nuclear issue

Over the last few years, the US Government, with the full support of the EU, has implemented a policy of imposing increasingly crippling sanctions against Iran, since this is considered to be the only way of preventing the Iranian Government from acquiring nuclear weapons. Alternative initiatives, such as the 2010 Turkey-Brazil plan to limit Iran's enrichment programme and export the excess enriched uranium, and a Russian proposal in the same direction were rejected by the US and the EU. As a result, Iran has been able to continue its suspicious enrichment activities. Accordingly, any new diplomatic agreement would have to include ever more intrusive monitoring of Iran's nuclear programme and a very well-defined list of steps that Iran must take in order to obtain a progressive lifting of sanctions. There are signs that Iran may be more flexible on International Atomic Energy Agency inspections, as well as limiting enrichment to 5 % and not stocking any excess enriched uranium on Iranian soil. In exchange, the US and its allies would have to acknowledge Iran's right to enrichment technology, a right that is one of the key points of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and to gradually dismantle the sanctions imposed.

In the light of the above:

1. would the Vice-President / High Representative be willing to offer meaningful incentives to Iran in order to make full use of the diplomacy part of the EU double-track approach towards Iran, taking into account the recent signs of flexibility from Iran? If so, what kind of incentives?
2. would the Vice-President / High Representative be willing to propose some form of gradual EU sanctions relief in exchange for very well-defined and verifiable steps by Iran which would address the international community's concerns regarding its nuclear programme?
3. would the Vice-President / High Representative consider instituting a parallel track of negotiations with Iran, which would include regional security issues of concern to both the EU and Iran, such as the situation in Syria, the Persian Gulf, Iraq and Afghanistan, as a way of building confidence between the parties?
4. is the Vice-President / High Representative aware of the progressive degradation that the crippling sanctions are inflicting on the social fabric of Iranian society, pushing many middle-class families – potential agents of secularism and democratic reform – into poverty or emigration? Does she believe it is in the EU's interests to continue with a policy that is weakening the Iranian middle class and playing into the hands of the Iranian hardliners?