

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 7, 2014

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

CC: The Honorable John F. Kerry, Secretary of State, Department of State

Dear Mr. President,

I write today to respectfully request that you discuss with French President François Hollande the troubling issue of the recent French trade delegation to Iran during his upcoming visit to the United States.

As you know, the cooperation between the U.S. and France through the P5+1 has been essential to developing an opening with Iran on its nuclear program and to reaching an interim agreement on the Joint Plan of Action (JPOA) last November.

It is this strong partnership with the French that makes the recent news of the French trade delegation's travel to Iran especially concerning. This three-day visit, which began on February 3 and was headed by the French employer's federation Medef, misrepresents the scope of the sanctions relief provided under the JPOA, and sends the wrong message to Tehran and to the rest of the world that sanctions are abating.

As Treasury Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence David Cohen stated most recently in his testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, "Iran is not open for business." On January 30, I conveyed that same message to EU High Representative Ashton and several European ambassadors whose countries had sent or planned to send delegations to Iran, including French Ambassador Delattre.

I was pleased to learn from Under Secretary Cohen that Administration officials are raising these concerns with their foreign counterparts at the highest levels of government. President Hollande's visit next week provides yet another opportunity.

As I know you are aware, it is critical that the U.S. and our European partners, including France, present a strong, united front in our efforts to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. These trade delegations to Iran risk undermining the international sanctions regime at precisely the wrong time and hinder the ability of P5+1 negotiators to pursue a comprehensive agreement that fully addresses the world's concerns over the Iranian nuclear program.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator