

# 17. Nuclear arms control and non-proliferation

## Overview

*The highlight in nuclear non-proliferation in 2015 was the landmark multinational agreement on limitations on Iran's nuclear programme (see section I). The negotiations between Iran and France, Germany and the United Kingdom (the E3), China, Russia and the United States (+3), facilitated by the European Union (EU), jointly referred to as E3/EU+3, yielded the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which defined a mutually agreed long-term solution to ensure Iran's nuclear programme will remain exclusively peaceful under a wide-ranging monitoring and verification regime implemented by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The JCPOA was signed in Vienna on 14 July 2015 in parallel with the 'Road-map for the clarification of past and present outstanding issues regarding Iran's nuclear programme' signed by Iran and the IAEA. The provisions of the JCPOA were incorporated into United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231, which paved the way for the lifting of all multilateral sanctions on Iran.*

*Throughout 2015 Iran continued to implement its Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA in connection with the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (Non-Proliferation Treaty, NPT), as well as the measures under the work plan referred to as the 'Joint Statement on a Framework for Cooperation', agreed between the IAEA and Iran on 11 November 2013, and the Joint Plan of Action (JPA) agreed with the E3/EU+3 on 24 November 2013. During 2015, as in previous years, the IAEA maintained its safeguards conclusion on the non-diversion of declared nuclear material at the nuclear facilities and locations outside facilities declared by Iran under its Safeguards Agreement. However, the IAEA was not in a position to provide credible assurance about the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran, and therefore to conclude that all nuclear material in Iran remains in use in peaceful activities. This broader conclusion can only be reached for states with an additional protocol in force and for which the IAEA has carried out its safeguards assessment for the 'state as a whole'.*

*The low point in the year was the rejection by Canada, the UK and the USA of the final document of the 2015 NPT Review Conference (see section II). The failure of the NPT Review Conference lay in disagreements over the issues of the establishment of a zone free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction in the region of the Middle East and the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons as well as the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament.*

*The United Nations General Assembly voted in 2015 to establish an Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) on 'Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament'.*

*mament negotiations' with a mandate to substantively address concrete effective legal measures, legal provisions and norms that will need to be concluded to attain and maintain a world without nuclear weapons (see section III).*

*The Conference on Disarmament (CD), the world's sole multilateral forum for negotiating arms control and disarmament agreements, once again failed to agree on a Programme of Work and therefore was unable to commence negotiations on any item on its agenda. The CD held a High Level Segment on 2–9 March, where foreign ministers and other senior officials from 31 member states addressed the conference, emphasizing, among other things, the importance of the 2015 NPT Review Conference and the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons.*

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