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Iran and the EU

The conclusion and implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) has opened the way for a renewal of broader relations. This renewed gradual engagement between the EU and Iran takes place on the basis of the full and continued implementation of the JCPOA by Iran and the other parties. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) regularly verifies Iran's compliance with the JCPOA.

The overarching agreed joint objectives of EU-Iran relations are:

- Ensuring and supporting the full implementation of the JCPOA in order to further improve and deepen bilateral cooperation.
- Developing cooperative relations in areas of mutual interest to benefit the economic development, human rights, prosperity and well-being of the people of Iran and the EU. These include cooperation on energy, environment, migration, drugs, humanitarian aid, transport, civil protection, science, education and culture.
- Promoting regional peace, security and stability as well as peaceful settlement of regional conflicts through dialogue and engagement.

In the follow-up to the Joint Statement by the High Representative/Vice-President of the European Union, Federica Mogherini and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Javad Zarif from 16 April 2016, a number of high-level visits and exchanges have advanced EU-Iran cooperation on economic relations, humanitarian aid, civil nuclear energy, environment and climate. High level dialogues on human rights and on finance and banking have also taken place.

The lifting of sanctions in line with the JCPOA has facilitated trade and economic relations. Trade between the EU and Iran has increased by 94% in the first year of JCPOA implementation, European foreign direct investments into Iran are on the rise in many sectors including energy, automotives and transport and there are overall good prospects for solid growth of the Iranian economy.

The European Union actively supports Iran's integration in the world economy and its membership in the World Trade Organization.

Sanctions imposed by the EU in view of the human rights situation in Iran, support for terrorism and other grounds are not part of the nuclear agreement and remain in place.

To move cooperation forward the EU and Iran have agreed to work towards opening an EU diplomatic representation – an EU Delegation – in Tehran; the Iranian Embassy in Belgium is already accredited

to the EU.

Currently, an EU liaison team is co-located in the Dutch Embassy in Tehran and the EU is locally represented by the Embassy of Bulgaria.

Contact

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In the follow-up to the Joint Statement by the High Representative / Vice-President of the European Union, Federica Mogherini and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Javad Zarif from April 16 2016, several activities have taken place in the agreed areas of cooperation.

Political Consultations

The two sides intend to enhance their political dialogue through consultations at the level of the HRVP and the Iranian Foreign Minister, annually. This advances the existing agreement to meet regularly for a High Level Dialogue at Deputy Minister/ Political Director level. Senior officials and experts will meet as required to explore other fields of mutual interest in which bilateral, regional and international cooperation projects could be developed.

The EU and Iran have held the second meeting of the [High Level Dialogue in Brussels](#) on 9 November 2016. This meeting followed the first session that took place in February 2016 in Tehran. The two delegations were headed by the EEAS SG Helga Schmid and by the Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister, Majid Takht-Ravanchi and included representatives from the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, other departments in the Iranian administration, the Iranian Central Bank and services from the European Commission. The agenda included discussions on bilateral issues, ranging from trade, energy, environment, migration, education, culture, research and transport, as well as on regional issues, notably Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Lebanon and Afghanistan. . A separate meeting was also organised on economic, finance and banking issues with representatives from the Iranian Central Bank and Commission services. The next High Level Dialogue is foreseen in the second half of 2017.

Human Rights

The two sides expressed their determination to enhance and promote human rights. In this context, in parallel to the High Level Dialogue, the first exploratory discussion on human rights was held. These talks form an integral part of the political dialogue and are expected to continue in this format.

Trade and Economic Relations

The EU is a global economic power and has the world's largest single market. Before the nuclear-related sanctions were imposed the EU, with its 28 Member States, was Iran's main economic partner. Since the nuclear deal came into force bilateral trade between the EU and Iran has almost doubled.

In addition, the lifting of UN and EU economic and financial nuclear-related sanctions as well as US

secondary economic and financial nuclear-related sanctions in line with the JCPOA has facilitated trade and economic relations. More details and information for stakeholders and business operators can be found in the [JCPOA Information Note](#).

This lifting of sanctions has already produced tangible economic results: trade between the EU and Iran has increased by 79% in the first year of JCPOA implementation, European foreign direct investments into Iran are on the rise in many sectors including energy, automotives and transport and there are overall good prospects for solid growth of the Iranian economy.

The European Union actively supports Iran's integration in the world economy and its membership in the World Trade Organization. In Geneva, the EU supported the resumption of the WTO accession process for Iran. Under the lead of the European Commissions DG Trade, an EU-Iran expert meeting on trade and investment took place on 24-25 November 2016 in Brussels.

An expert mission [of European Union officials visited Iran](#) from 11-14 July 2016 to discuss deeper cooperation in the fields of economic policy, trade, investment and finance.

Banking and Finance

The EEAS and Commission services conduct outreach activities between the global banking sector and Iran. In May 2016, EU officials participated in a [Banking Conference took place in London](#) which connected senior bankers, financiers and capital market professionals from Iran with the international financial community. The EEAS is also regularly speaking at the bi-annual Banking and Business forum Iran-Europe (Frankfurt/ Tehran).

On 24 June 2016, the [Financial Action Task Force \(FATF\) has suspended counter-measures](#) for twelve months in response to Iran's adoption of, and high-level political commitment to, an Action Plan to address its strategic deficiencies in the areas of money laundering and terrorist financing (AML/CFT). The EU supports Iran in implementing the Action Plan, including with technical assistance.

Industry and Entrepreneurship

From 16 to 19 October 2016, an [Economic Mission led by EU Commissioner Elżbieta Bieńkowska](#), responsible for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, took place in Iran. The Commissioner initiated an informal broad based industrial dialogue which will cover a number of key sectors of common interest such as textile, automotive, raw materials, tourism, construction and pharmaceuticals/biotech. In this context, Bieńkowska delivered an opening speech at the EU-Iran Conference on Economic, Industrial and Investment opportunities alongside Mr Mohammad Reza Nematzadeh, Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade. Commissioner Elżbieta **Bieńkowska** said: *"The EU is committed to expand its economic ties with Iran. My mission aims at meeting Iranian authorities and business representatives, build trust and find solutions enabling a business environment that brings European and Iranian businesses together."*

Macro-economics

A first "macro-economic dialogue" took place on 11 July 2017 in Tehran between ECFIN Commission

services (joined by the European Central Bank) and the Ministry of Economy and Finance, as well as the Central Bank of Iran. It was successful in establishing a channel of communication and exchange of information on macroeconomic fundamentals between relevant EU and Iranian actors such as the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Central Bank of Iran, the Research Centre of the Iranian Parliament, the Chamber of Commerce of Iran and the National Development Fund (the Iranian sovereign fund).

Agriculture

A technical mission of the European Commission (DG Agriculture) went to Tehran on 23 and 24 April to pave the way to Commissioner Hogan's High Level Mission (HLM) to Iran that is foreseen to take place in Tehran from 10 to 13 of November 2017.

The HLM will focus on agri-food sector; Commissioner Hogan will be accompanied by a delegation of roughly 50 EU enterprises: in this framework, EU Health and Food agency (CHAFFEA) and a contractor will organize B2B meetings with local potential partners and retail/site visits for the EU businessmen.

A workshop on the use of TRACES took place in Tehran from 7-11 May 2017 organized through the EU Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument (TAIEX). TRACES is the European Commission's multilingual online management tool for all sanitary requirements on intra-EU trade and importation of animals, semen and embryo, food, feed and plants. The workshop was aimed at teaching about the process of certifying animal products from Iran to meet the standards necessary for import into the EU.

Transport

In April 2016, EU and Iran expressed their commitment to a safe and sustainable development of all modes of transportation in order to support the resumption of trade, investment and citizens' links.

A visit of the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) to Iran took place in early May 2016 to consider a Third Country Operator authorization for four Iranian carriers.

The European Commission (DG Mobility and Transport) carried out an Air Safety Mission to Iran in early May 2016 and a presentation of the Iranian airline Iran Air took place at the June 2016 meeting of the EU Air Safety Committee. This led to full access of Iran Air to the EU. The [European Commission updated the EU Air Safety List](#) on 16 June 2016 and cleared most aircraft of Iran Air from the list.

A railway seminar took place from 17-18 October 2016 in Tehran, with participation of the European Railway Agency, DG Mobility and Transport and industry representatives.

Energy

A specific [joint statement on energy](#) has been agreed on 16 April 2016 between Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Zanganeh, Energy Minister Hamid Chitchian and EU Commissioner for Energy Miguel Arias Cañete. It establishes a high level dialogue on energy between the EU and Iran and defines the scope and aims of cooperation on fossil fuels as well as electricity, renewable energy and energy efficiency.

In April 2017, Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy Miguel Arias Cañete travelled to Tehran to strengthen the energy and climate ties with Iran. On 29 April, he participated in the first-ever [Iran-EU Business Forum on Sustainable Energy](#). The Forum gathered more than 50 European companies and business associations and some 40 Iranian energy companies to enable business relations and partnerships between Iran and the EU and lay the ground for further cooperation and joint partnerships in the energy sector. It provided a platform for investors and businesses to look into investment opportunities for clean energy, renewables, energy efficiency and energy conservation actions in Iran.

Civil Nuclear Cooperation

A [Joint Statement on Cooperation in the Field of Nuclear Energy](#) and a [Joint Statement on Science, Technology, Research and Innovation](#) have been adopted during the April 2016 EU high-level visit to Iran.

An [Action Document for Iran under the Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation](#) was adopted in May 2016. The European Commission (DG Development and Cooperation) made 5 million EUR available for this cooperation in the 2016 Annual Action Plan. The first two major contracts under this instrument have been awarded, one for [cooperation with the Iran Nuclear Regulatory Authority \(INRA\)](#) on nuclear safety and one for stress tests at Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant. The Kick-off meeting for the cooperation with the Iranian Nuclear Regulator project will be held in Tehran in July 2017.

A stress test seminar took place from 13-14 June 2016 in Brussels.

The European Commission (DG Research and Innovation) held a first nuclear Working Group meeting with Iran on 8 September 2016 in Brussels. A second meeting was held in Tehran on 3-5 July 2017. Iranian delegations have visited the Joint Research Centre (JRC) in Geel and the Joint European Torus (JET) research centre and made a visit to JRC Ispra for an EU course on nuclear safeguards and non-proliferation.

On 15 September 2016, [Iranian Vice President and head of the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran, Ali Akbar Salehi, visited Brussels](#) and meetings were held with HRVP Federica Mogherini.

The European Commission (DG Energy) held a joint [EU-Iran high-level seminar on nuclear cooperation and governance](#) in Brussels on 28 February/1 March 2017.

On 28 and 29 June 2017, Iranian participants attended the meeting of the European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group (ENSREG).

Migration

The EU and Iran agreed to launch a comprehensive migration dialogue. The migration dialogue is expected to focus on migration management and flows as well as on policy and legislative approaches and priorities in relation to regular and irregular migration, asylum seekers and refugees, both at national and regional levels. So far discussions have taken place at expert level, involving the European Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS), as well as the Iranian Ministry of the Interior, the Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs (BAFIA), and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Further cooperation on migration matters between the EU and Iran is taking place

in the context of the Silk Routes Partnership for Migration (Budapest process).

Humanitarian Cooperation

A [visit of Commissioner Christos Stylianides](#) to Iran took place on 21-25 October 2016 to discuss humanitarian issues in the region and to visit EU funded projects assisting Afghan refugees.

The European Commission (DG Humanitarian Aid & Civil Protection) provides humanitarian funding benefitting Afghan refugees in Iran, focusing on areas such as protection, food, emergency shelter, education, health, water, hygiene and sanitation. In 2016-2017, assistance has reached about 25 million EUR (also see the [announcement of over 44 million EUR of EU humanitarian funding](#) to help people in need in Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan).

Environment

Based on the Joint Statement agreed during the EU high level visit in Tehran on 16 April 2016 and following a bilateral meeting held at this occasion between the EU Commissioner for the Environment Karmenu Vella and Vice President Masoumeh Ebtekar, Head of the Environmental Protection Organization in Iran, a technical mission from Iran visited Brussels on 27-28 September 2016. The Iranian delegation met its counterparts in the European Commission and discussed possible areas of future cooperation. Following these exchanges, on 16 December 2016, Vice President Masoumeh Ebtekar visited Brussels and signed with Commissioner Vella a Framework for Cooperation on Environment where they formally agreed to promote environmental cooperation between the EU and Iran.

In February 2017, EU Director General for Environment Daniel Calleja travelled to Iran for the inaugural session of the International Environmental Exhibition 'Resilient Economy, Green Economy', accompanied by a delegation of EU business associations and NGOs. He also held bilateral a number of meetings which concluded in the agreement to launch, in the second half of 2017, three EU-Iran working groups on a) circular economy and waste with particular attention on coastal areas, b) water and marine litter and c) air quality and dust and sand storms.

Climate Change

A statement on climate change was agreed between Vice President Masoumeh Ebtekar and Commissioner Arias Cañete on 16 December 2016, which lays the ground for future bilateral cooperation in support of the implementation of the Paris agreement by Iran.

During his two-day visit in Tehran on 29-30 April 2017, Commissioner Arias Cañete not only participated in the Business Forum on Sustainable Energy but also opened the EU-Iran High Level Conference on Climate Change. The event brought together high level Iranian and European policy-makers as well as representatives of international organisations. The conference discussed progress within the Paris Agreement and the role of clean energy in the transition to a low-carbon economy as well as urgent actions needed to adapt to the consequences of climate change.

Science, Research and Innovation

The European Union is investing heavily in science, research and innovation with EUR 80 billion allocated to the EU's Research and Innovation programme over the 7 years period - Horizon 2020 (2014-2020). The programme is "open to the world" and participation from countries outside of the EU is strongly encouraged. Under Horizon 2020, the Iranian private and public institutions are eligible for participation and automatic funding in the EU Research and Innovation Programme.

During the 16 April 2016 EU high level visit in Iran, to which Commissioner Moedas participated, a Joint Statement in Science, Research, Technology and Innovation was agreed. The document establishes a Working Group which aims at creating an official platform to exchange and cooperate on issues of common interest and paving the ground for strengthening and improving the cooperation in science, technology, research and innovation between Iran and EU.

On 7 September 2016, the Working Group met for the first time in Brussels. Both parties agreed that cooperation under the EU Horizon 2020 programme will be strengthened, particularly in the scientific fields of Health, Energy, Food, Water, Environment, Climate Change, Social Sciences and Humanities, with particular attention to Migration and Key Enabling Technologies.

The second meeting of the Working Group took place in Tehran on 2 July 2017 and further consolidated the burgeoning collaboration between the EU and Iran on research, science, technology and higher education.

Education

[Erasmus+](#) is the EU programme in the fields of education, training, youth and sport. All actions under the programme, including Capacity Building in Higher Education, International Credit Mobility, Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees and the Jean Monnet activities, are opened to Iran. For the year 2017, Iran ranked third in the list of top sending countries for students who received an [ERASMUS Mundus scholarship](#) to study in Europe. A number of Iranian students participated also in the International Credit Mobility programme.

On 2-3 July 2017 the EU and Iran co-hosted a two-day [Higher Education and Research Event](#) in Tehran to promote the EU programmes and expand bilateral cooperation between higher education institutions, research institutes and other organisations. The first day of the event focused on research funding opportunities available under the Horizon 2020 programme. This included thematic workshops on different topics, as well as mobility grants for researchers from the European Research Council and Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions. The second day was dedicated to presenting opportunities for Iran-EU cooperation under Erasmus+, including Capacity Building in Higher Education, International Credit Mobility, Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees and the Jean Monnet activities. To promote cooperation between the EU and Iranian institutions, sessions were arranged on both days to allow university officials and academics the opportunity to network.

Sanctions

A number of [proliferation-related sanctions and restrictions](#) remain in place even after Implementation Day of the [Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action \(JCPOA\)](#) though. These concern inter

alia the arms-embargo, sanctions related to missile technology, restrictions on certain nuclear-related transfers and activities, and provisions concerning certain metals and software which are subject to an authorisation regime.

Sanctions imposed by the EU in view of the [human rights](#) situation in Iran, support for terrorism and other grounds are not part of the JCPOA and remain in place.

Measures adopted by the EU in relation to concerns on human rights violations include an asset freeze and visa ban on 82 persons and one entity responsible for grave human rights violations, as well as a ban on exports to Iran of equipment which might be used for internal repression and of equipment for monitoring telecommunications.

Iranian persons who are also listed under [EU terrorism](#) and [Syria sanctions](#) regimes (or any other EU sanctions regime) continue to be subject to restrictive measures under these regimes which are outside the scope of the JCPOA

For all nuclear and non-nuclear sanctions-related questions please contact: EEAS Sanctions Policy Division, sanctions@eeas.europa.eu

See also

Decision concerning restrictive measures against Iran

Regulation concerning restrictive measures against Iran

Decision concerning restrictive measures directed against certain persons and entities

Regulation concerning restrictive measures directed against certain persons, entities

Common Position on the application of specific measures to combat terrorism

Regulation on the application of specific measures to combat terrorism

Decision on concerning restrictive measures against Syria

Regulation restrictive measures against Syria

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