

Spain hopes trade with Iran to become prosperous again: *Envoy*

By Sadeq Dehqan & Reza Abesh Ahmadlou
Staff writers

The Economic and Commercial Office of Spain in Tehran hopes that the economic exchanges between the two countries will return to their prosperous days, said Spanish Ambassador to Iran Angel Losada Fernandez. Talking to Iran Daily, the top diplomat noted that before the JCPOA, the trade between Iran and Spain amounted to €2 billion per annum, which has decreased now to €200 million. He added that despite the significant drop in economic exchanges between the two countries due to the collapse of the JCPOA, his country kept its Economic and Commercial Office open in Iran. "I am interested in the development of trade deals between the two countries, because Spain enjoys a very flexible economy and has always been keen on developing its economic relations with other countries, including Iran," Losada noted. Referring to the nuclear nego-

tiations between Iran and the P5+1, the envoy said, "The JCPOA is very important for us as we are waiting for the agreement to be resumed."

Political approximation

Pointing to the presidency of the Council of the European Union which Spain took over on July 1, he noted that his country is trying to develop relations between Iran and European states within the framework of mutual respect and constructive will. "Spain's rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union has granted the country a special position, as a result of which I, as the ambassador of Spain, am in charge of the local presidency of the EU, so we are doing our best to establish relations between Iran and Europe based on friendship and with a view to build a better future," the diplomat explained. He went on to say that the periodic presidency of the Council of the European Union is effective in converging the views of the member states in various fields, including Iran issues,

and therefore we must pay attention to this issue founding our activities on the said basis.

"Currently, Spain has to reach an understanding with its 26 partners in the EU on various issues, as it is important in the case of Iran because 22 EU states have their embassies in Iran."

Referring to the history of relations between the two countries, Iran and Spain, the ambassador said the two countries have an ancient and long history of relations as according to some documents, the relations date back to 400 years ago.

"Today, the relations between Iran and Spain are based on mutual respect with an eye on building the future," he noted.

An issue that has affected the relations between the two countries which leaves an impact on the prospects of the relations in the future is the arrest of a Spanish citizen who has been in Iranian prisons since last year, he criticized.

"In my opinion, such issues is not in accordance with the vision of the two countries to



Spanish Ambassador to Iran Angel Losada Fernandez
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build the future which slows down the development of relations," the envoy added. In order to solve the problem, Spanish Foreign Minister José Manuel Albares Bueno has negotiated with his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, he said expressing his hope on resolving the issue as soon as possible.

Cultural bridges

Culture is another important aspect in the relations between the two countries, Losada said adding that the point is that there is a lot of

interest in Iranian culture in Spain, and as I noticed, the same interest in Spanish culture is also observed in Iran. Referring to the cultural similarities of the two countries, the Spanish ambassador stated that the Granada Botanical Gardens in the south of Spain are one of the cultural heritages of the European country, which are built exactly according to the models of Iranian gardens (paradise gardens).

The paradise garden is a form of garden of Old Iranian origin, symmetrical and most often enclosed. The most tra-

ditional form is a rectangular garden split into four quarters with a pond in the center, a fourfold design called chahar bagh (four gardens). One of the most important elements of paradise gardens is water, with ponds, canals, rills, and fountains all being common features. Scent is an essential element with fruit-bearing trees and flowers selected for their fragrance. "Personally, I am very interested in working on commonalities and cultural similarities that can be witnessed in the two countries," the envoy concluded.

NEWS IN BRIEF

China to curb 'disruption' in currency market



AFP - China's central bank said on Monday it would crack down on speculation that distorts the value of the yuan as the country's currency sees persistent volatility. The People's Bank of China said in a statement Monday that it had convened a "special meeting" to discuss "the recent situation in the foreign exchange market and issues around the exchange rate of the renminbi", the official name for the yuan.

Russian oil grabs bigger slice of Czech imports



REUTERS - Russian crude accounted for a bigger slice of the Czech Republic's oil imports in the first half, state oil pipeline operator MERO said on Monday, despite the country's plan to wean itself off Russian supply. Russian oil accounted for 65% of total imports, up from 56% for the full year in 2022 and from 49% in 2021. The Czech Republic imports oil through the Druzhba pipeline via Ukraine and through the IKL pipeline which links to the TAL pipeline in Germany.

Will EU return to Iran negotiating table?

By Hassan Beheshtipour
International affairs expert

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

Luigi Di Maio, the European Union's special representative for the Persian Gulf region, met separately with Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and his deputy for political affairs Ali Baqeri-Kani in Tehran on Monday. During his meeting with Baqeri-Kani, the Iranian deputy minister expressed said Tehran would welcome any European initiative aimed at fostering cooperation. In response, Di Maio stressed the importance of maintaining an ongoing dialogue and engagement with the Islamic Republic. The exact purpose of Di

Maio's visit to Tehran remains somewhat unclear, as it is not considered a high-level diplomatic mission. Therefore, a more thorough assessment of the trip will have to wait until there are more about his subsequent statements and positions following the meetings in Tehran. Nonetheless, there have been several bones of contention between Iran and Europe in recent months that soured their relationship. One such issue is Europe's rigid stance on Iran's domestic protests that hit some Iranian cities last year. Europeans had hoped that these protests might compel Tehran to alter its approach to regional affairs, the Ukraine conflict, human rights, and nuclear negotiations. However, they gradually realized that Iran

had not made significant changes to its entrenched positions. Another source of tension between Iran and Europe is the alleged military cooperation between Iran and Russia against Ukraine. Moreover, the level of Iran's cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and its participation in nuclear negotiations have also been points of contention between the two sides. It is noteworthy that Di Maio's visit coincided with the IAEA's quarterly Board of Governors meeting. In the past, Europe had played the role of a mediator between Iran and the United States. However, due to their increasingly tough stances against Iran, Tehran decided to sideline Eu-

rope and instead entrusted this role to Oman and Qatar. This shift ultimately led to an agreement between Iran and the United States concerning the exchange of prisoners and the release of Iran's frozen assets in South Korea. It appears that these critical issues were on the agenda for the European special envoy's talks with Iranian authorities. Accordingly, interpreting the visit of a European delegation to Tehran should not automatically imply a complete shift in Europe's stance toward Iran or an attempt to correct past mistakes.

Nevertheless, during his meeting with Iran's deputy foreign minister, Di Maio emphasized Europe's desire to keep the lines of communication and interaction with Tehran open. This stance is undoubtedly constructive and suggests that Europe is not interested in severing ties with Iran completely. In the past, Iran and Europe had engaged in a project termed "critical dialogue." During the 1990s, the EU initiated this dialogue with Tehran while maintaining a critical perspective. Iran had welcomed this proposal

at the time. Now, in light of the recent strains in Iran-EU relations, the European special envoy's emphasis on maintaining open channels of dialogue and interaction indicates the EU's intention to settle disputes with Iran through peaceful means, rather than escalating tensions. This approach is the right path to take, and if pursued, Iran and the EU can address their differences and steadily identify areas for cooperation. However, whether the special envoy's positions will be put into practice by the EU remains to be seen.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



First Announcement

N.I.S.O.C
 NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY
 AHVAZ, IRAN

TENDER NO.: 01-31-9680036

National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) intends to purchase the following goods

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Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their "Intention To Participate" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 1, available at: www.nisoc.ir, not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded.

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Tender documents including the materials through technical specifications and Qualitative Assessment Forms can be accessed via: www.nisoc.ir-material-procurement-management-tab

ONLY ACCEPTABLE DELIVERY TERM IS D.D.P., NISOC'S WAREHOUSE, AGHAJARI, IRAN

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