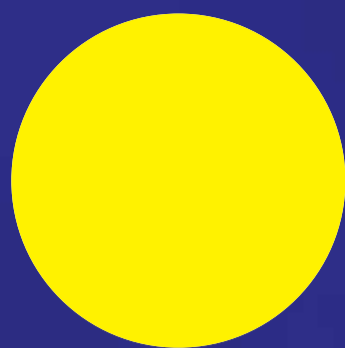




Non-oil exports up 18% in eight months:

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Geneva Conduit for Reviving Iran-Europe Ties

By Ebrahim Beheshti
Staff writer

On Friday, Geneva will play host to a new round of negotiations between Iran and the European troika. According to the pre-set agenda, deputy foreign ministers from Iran, the UK, France, and Germany will hold talks on a range of bilateral, regional, and international issues, at a time when relations between Tehran and Brussels have hit rock bottom over the past few years. Iran's peaceful nuclear program, the war in Ukraine, Israel's ongoing attacks on the Gaza Strip and Lebanon, and the fallout of Donald Trump's victory in the US presidential election, which could affect ties between Iran and Europe, are

likely to top the agenda. Iran's new government took office with the slogan of engagement with the world and a balanced foreign policy. Many foreign policy experts and analysts have expressed optimism about the start of a new round of talks, emphasizing that Iran and Europe have shared interests that have been harmed by their estrangement. Now, a golden opportunity has arisen for Iran and European countries to take steps toward reducing tensions and getting closer to each other. This path will not only serve the interests of both Iran and Europe but also have a major impact on defusing regional tensions.

To analyze the development, Iran Daily has asked Bahram Qassemi and Abolqassem Delfi to share their thoughts. The two are former diplomats, European affairs experts, and former Iranian ambassadors to France. Qassemi, a former spokesperson for the Foreign Ministry, believes that regional and global stability and security depend on mutual respect and non-interference in each other's affairs. He points out that the historical relations between Iran and Europe are a good foundation for building a strong and stable relationship. Delfi thinks that the recent European pressure on Iran over the nuclear issue is a sign of Europe's willingness to engage in dialogue and rapprochement with Iran.



A window of opportunity for restoring relations

Anti-Iran resolution; a precursor to negotiating with Tehran

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

IRAN DAILY: What are the main issues that Iran and Europe currently disagree on as they prepare to start talks?

ABOLQASSEM DELFI: When discussing Iran-Europe relations, we need to bear in mind that Europe is not a monolithic entity. Not all European countries view Iran through the same lens, just as there may be differing perspectives on Europe within Iran. Another point to consider is that Iran and Europe have faced numerous challenges over the past two decades. Once, Europe was Iran's top trading partner, and various European countries had strong bilateral relations with Iran in the fields of science, economy, culture, and politics. However, it's fair to say that Iran-Europe relations are not currently good. The nuclear issue has been the main bone of contention between Iran and Europe since 2002, culminating in the 2015 landmark agreement of JCPOA, which was later derailed by Trump's withdrawal. The nuclear issue remained unresolved until 2022.

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Iran and Europe; a new beginning

By Bahram Qassemi
Former spokesman of Iran's Foreign Ministry

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

In recent days, foreign sources, followed by official sources, have reported on a forthcoming joint meeting between Iran and three European countries at the deputy ministerial level. The news itself, without any premature judgment on its outcome, signals a new beginning, which had been gradually fading into oblivion with the end of president Rouhani's government. The government led president Raisi did not believe in continuing the talks on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and argued that the issue was a done deal and non-negotiable. If talks were to take place, they should solely focus on lifting sanctions, making any mention of the JCPOA meaningless and unwelcome. In fact, the word JCPOA seemed to be a "taboo" term in domestic discourse. The insistence on this approach was extremely serious. During the then-Iranian political deputy's trip to the capitals of three European countries after a lengthy hiatus (apparently initiated by the French side and coordinated with the other two capitals), a concerted effort was made to steer clear of mentioning the JCPOA, instead focusing solely on lifting sanctions, and nothing else.

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