

Austria stable, low-profile partner for Iran in startups, AI: *Businessman*



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INTERVIEW

Austria stands as an industrialized and advanced European nation, making its economic ties with Iran particularly significant. While Austria may not be counted among the political and economic heavyweights of Europe, its reputation for staying out of conflicts and maintaining neutrality has boosted the weight and value of establishing and stepping up bilateral relations across various sectors. As such, Austria — with its robust economy and expertise in fields like machinery, engineering, and energy — can come across as a stable and low-tension partner for any country.

In 1955, Austria adopted its Declaration of Neutrality. According to this declaration, Austria will not sign up for any military alliances and will not allow any foreign military bases on its soil. This declaration is enshrined in the Austrian constitution, and since then, the nation has built its foreign policy around the principle of neutrality.

The history of Iran-Austria relations goes back over 500 years, with both nations maintaining long-standing ties in political, economic, and cultural arenas. Among the most notable milestones in this relationship was Austria's role as host for the JCPOA talks, which resulted in an agreement on Iran's nuclear program in 2015. The Iran-Austria Joint Chamber of Commerce kicked off its activities in 2018, aiming to strengthen and expand commercial, industrial, and economic ties between Iranian and Austrian economic activists, and to smooth the way for connections between the two countries. Over the years, the chamber has kept up its efforts through regular brainstorming and B2B meetings, networking, seminars, webinars, sending business delegations, and other events.

Iran Daily sat down with Alireza Nazemolroayaei, vice president of the Iran-Austria Joint Chamber of Commerce, to discuss the state of relations, especially in the economic and trade arenas. Here is the full interview:



Lab No. 1 and an entrepreneurship networking program are held with the virtual participation of 10 Iranian startup teams selected by Startup Avenue in April 2022.

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Alireza Nazemolroayaei



Austria is home to countless small businesses that are in demand worldwide. Thanks to the presence of various international organizations, Austria attracts major investment from leading global companies, setting the stage for fruitful cooperation.

IRAN DAILY: Could you elaborate on the history of Iran-Austria relations and the extent of mutual familiarity?

NAZEMOLROAYAEI: Iran and Austria share a long-standing relationship. Austria plays an active role on the international stage, hosting several key international organizations, including the United Nations headquarters in Vienna — one of the main UN offices worldwide. Vienna is also home to the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and the OPEC Fund for International Development, both of which Iran helped found.

Interestingly, a pavilion known as the “Scholars Pavilion” has been set up in the main courtyard of the UN office in Vienna, featuring statues of Avicenna (physician and philosopher), al-Razi (physician, chemist, and discoverer of alcohol and sulfuric acid), al-Biruni (mathematician, astronomer, and front-runner theorist of the Earth's axial rotation), and Omar Khayyam (poet and mathematician, creator of the so-called Pascal's Triangle). This pavilion draws in many Austrians and tourists daily, raising awareness of the contributions Iranian scholars have made to the world.

In which economic and commercial sectors can the two countries cooperate?

Austria has made great strides in manufacturing auto parts, assembling foreign cars, and innovating in automotive tech-

nologies. The country is also a front-runner in banking and has a high output of petrochemical raw materials. Furthermore, Austria has achieved significant progress in producing insulation materials, car engines, industrial machinery, and turbines. It also performs well in the production of low-voltage electrical systems, PLCs, and relay circuits.

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On the other hand, Iran can step in to supply Austria with the petrochemical products it needs. Iran also boasts high-quality oil and petrochemical raw materials that could be provided to Austrian manufacturers. Of course, due to current sanctions against Iran, direct exports of many products to

Austria are not possible, but Iranian goods find their way to Austria through third countries.

Has the Iran-Austria Chamber taken any steps to promote cooperation in new technologies?

As you are aware, Austria is among Europe's frontrunners in artificial intelligence and is considered a hub for AI on the continent. Austria also leads the pack in startups and software, offering strong support for the creation

and launch of new ventures.

To move forward with cooperation in startups and to tap into Austria's technological expertise, including AI, the Startup Avenue event was held in Austria in 2022, organized by the Iran-Austria Joint Chamber of Commerce and the Vienna University of Economics and Business. Five hundred Iranian startups took part in this event, with the top 10 selected, paving the way for collaboration between the two sides in this field.



Kambis Kohansal Vajargah (3rd-L), the Iranian head of Startup-Services at the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, takes a group photo with Austrian entrepreneurs at an Entrepreneurship Night at the University of Vienna in June 2025.

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