

Roundtable Report

CSR-SWP Roundtable

on

Iran-EU Relations and Regional Issues

19 October 2010, Tehran

On 19 October 2010 a two-session roundtable was held at the Center for Strategic Research (CSR) with the participation of a delegation from the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP). The SWP delegation, a guest of the Institute for Political and International Studies (IPIS) – the Foreign Ministry’s think tank - engaged with Iranian experts in a wide-ranging discussion on Iran–EU relations as well as on regional issues of common interest. In the first session on regional issues, the war in Afghanistan and the Middle East peace process were discussed.

In the second session on Iran–EU relations, four presentations were made, two from each side. The Iranian side addressed the foundations and roots of bilateral relations with the EU, existing problems, and the prospects for the future in light of the foreign policy approach and policies of both sides. The Iranian experts also dwelled on the areas of common interest between the two sides, emphasizing Iran’s interest in and eagerness to see the development of an EU comprehensive engagement strategy for dealing with Iran. To this end, from the Iranian point of view, Track–II diplomacy was considered to play an important part in improving the current state of relations.

The German delegation, for its part, addressed the history of



Iran-EU relations since the 1979 Revolution, particularly since the beginning of the Iran–Iraq War and its negative impact on the relations - lost opportunities for both sides. The SWP delegation also dealt with the differences between the approaches adopted by the U.S. and EU respectively in dealing with Iran. On a positive note, the German side welcomed Iran's participation in the International Contact Group on Afghanistan and expressed the hope that cooperation between Iran and the West on Afghanistan can pave the way for further improvement in bilateral relations on a larger scale.

To conclude the event – which was agreed in advance to follow Chatham House Rules - Dr Volker Perthes, the SWP director, expressed satisfaction with the roundtable and also expressed the hope that the cooperation between SWP and CSR would further continue and expand in the future. Dr. Mahmood Vaezi, CSR Deputy for Foreign Policy Research and head of the Iranian side, also expressed satisfaction with the exchange and underlined the fact that the current state of relations, involving many lost opportunities in the past which have practically damaged both sides and helped complicate the situation, including on the nuclear dossier, does not appear to serve the long-term interests of either side. Alluding to the centuries-old Iranian relations with Europe, he was of the firm view that there exists ample room for economic and cultural, and even political, cooperation between the two sides, particularly with respect to critical regional situations and conflicts.

The following pieces contain a much revised and expanded version of the two sets of comments made by the Iranian side in the session on Iran-EU relations.



I

Iran-EU Relations: New Characteristics and Tendencies**Hamid Aboutalebi***

The *principal question* I would like to raise here is not on the subject of our current real politics per se, but a number of questions about the propensity, orientation, and the tendencies involved and also the probable future scenarios emerging from the current state of relations between Iran and the EU. Questions such as:

What is the direction EU is pursuing its relations with Iran?

Where are EU and Iran leading their relations?

What is the ultimate destination of the current state of relations?

What kind of future could be predicted for Iran-EU relations? and

Are Iran-EU relations on the verge of *extinction* or are they approaching *Reconciliation*?

I grant that it is not easy at all to arrive at satisfactory responses to these questions – at least here in this rather brief session. Depending on the facts one might take into account during a specific time period, let's say the past five years, one could come up with a wide range of nuanced responses to each of them. But, given the actual parameters of our exchange today, especially time constraint, I would like to address the problematique at hand on the basis of a brief overview of the following three parts:

A. Foundations of Iran-EU Relations

B. New Dilemmas or Predicaments in Iran-EU Relations

C. Predictable Future of Iran-EU Relations

A. Foundations of Iran- EU Relations

Due to the long historical background and also the depth of our

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relations – which I consider an essential and indispensable part of the past and also for the future – first I refer to the foundations, and then turn to the characteristics and tendencies. The relations are based on long-standing, rich and varied historical, social, economic, and finally, political, foundations, which are rooted in deep socio-cultural traditions, mutual understanding, and mutual interests. It should be added right here that despite these historical positive factors, the actual state of relations during the past decades have not been as solid or reassuring as we – both sides, I presume - would have liked to see. After an almost decade and a half of what could be called ambiguity in relations – which could be attributed to a host of factors, on both sides, including in particular the impact of the 1979 Revolution and its aftershocks in various fields and areas (beyond the scope of my remarks at this session) - EU and Iran finally decided to opt for new approaches and open a new page in their bilateral relations. As of mid-1990s, under new general political circumstances at various levels, both sides opted for dialogue; to sit together to talk, exchange views, and with a future-oriented outlook, look at potential opportunities for cooperation. The outcome of the new approach was engagement in a process of dialogue, which could be divided into two phases; Critical Dialogue (1995-97) and Comprehensive Dialogue (1997-2005). The first phase, in the course of which both sides engaged in discussions on a range of issues of concern and interest to them respectively, while useful at the time, did not reach any particular and concrete outcome, also because of the emergence of a set of political difficulties in late 1996 and early 1997. That rather short and exploratory – albeit inconclusive – period of “dialogue” led to another phase of dialogue of a much broader scope following the victory of Seyyed Mohammad Khatami in Iran’s presidential elections on a reform platform in late May 1997.

Comprehensive Dialogue (1997-2005)

As already indicated, the presidency of Khatami, with a pronounced



emphasis on reducing then-existing active tension with the outside world, including with European countries, precipitated a positive change of outlook in Europe, as elsewhere. In October 1998, the Council of Europe asked the European Commission to establish contacts with Iran to explore possibilities for cooperation. Subsequently a Commission-Iran Technical Meeting was held in December 1998, where it was agreed to explore a number of possible areas for co-operation, including energy, environment, transport, agriculture, drugs control, refugees and human rights. With the exception of some humanitarian assistance and limited aid for drug control; there was practically no financial and technical cooperation between EC and Iran at the time, even though joint working groups had been set up previously.

The Comprehensive Dialogue did in fact contribute to the improvement of relations, but it proved limited in scope. Its limitations have been somehow complemented through the establishment of a number of technical working groups between the Commission and Iran, which served to identify areas of mutual interest and possible co-operation. However, as it became clear in the course of the Dialogue, lack of a contractual framework limited in very practical terms the development of the desired co-operation.

Notwithstanding the institutional limitations, the Comprehensive Dialogue allowed a wide-ranging exchange of views on the following issues and situations:

- Global issues (terrorism, human rights and proliferation);
- Regional issues (Iraq, Persian Gulf, Central Asia, the Middle East Peace Process); and
- Areas of cooperation (drugs, refugees, energy, trade and investment).

From an overall point of view, it can be said that the relations between Iran and various members of the Union improved considerably following the initiation of the Comprehensive dialogue. High-level exchanges as of 1997 underscore this aspect. The Italian Prime Minister



visited Tehran in 1997. In 1999, President Khatami visited Italy and France, and the Presidents of Austria and Greece visited Iran the same year. President Khatami also made a three-day visit to Germany in July 2000. Moreover, during the period under review numerous visits took place at the level of Foreign Ministers and other Ministers. The British-Iranian relations, which had been tension-ridden for quite a number of years, were unblocked in 1998 by the defusing of the Rushdie fatwa issue and Ambassadors were exchanged in mid-1999.

Aside from active pursuit of wide-ranging exchanges on different issues and situations – as already mentioned - Iran also manifested its strong interest in strengthening relations with the EU at a more institutional level. Establishment of joint working groups on such issues and fields as energy, drugs, refugees, trade and investment, and human rights, which met periodically over a number of years – without prejudice to the quality of discussions or the actual outcome of each, embodied the mutual will towards that institutional orientation. Commencement of negotiations in 2004 on a Trade and Co-operation Agreement, as a major policy objective of the Khatami government, aimed at further enhancing then fast expanding relations with the EU – which as we all know, failed to materialize due to the negative impact of impasse in the nuclear negotiations.

It should be mentioned, however, that as a result of easing tension and subsequent expanding relations EU came to account for over 40% of Iran's imports -- Iran's largest trading partner. EU exports to Iran during the period under review, dominated by manufactured goods, vehicles, chemicals and pharmaceuticals, also experienced substantial increase over the period ending 1995. Iran's exports to the EU (over 36% of total exports), dominated by petroleum (over 80% of total), and followed by carpets, pistachios, caviar, and other traditional export items, have also reflected the positive impact of expanding relations. Aside from this improved economic-trade picture, EU also showed the tendency that Iran could in the future enjoy a stronger position as its regional economic



partner, which would offer expanded opportunities for trade and investment, depending, of course, on substantial reform and overhaul of Iran's economic and trade policies.

Given the much improved state of relations, as reflected in the conclusions of the General Affairs Council of 20 November 2000, the Commission recommended to the Council to develop closer relations with Iran along the following lines:

- Encouragement of political and economic developments through:

- More frequent official and unofficial bilateral contacts;
- Development of exchange of views/co-operation in areas of mutual interest and concern (such as drugs, rule of law, refugees, etc);
- Readiness to engage in dialogue on other issues;
- Strengthening the *Common Foreign and Security Policy* (CFSP) dialogue by deepening the dialogue in areas such as regional security, weapons of mass destruction, nuclear proliferation); and
- Seeking appropriate ways of developing people to people contacts.

- promotion of bilateral economic relations through:

- Negotiation of a Trade and Co-operation Agreement; and
- Continuation of Commission - Iran working groups on energy, trade and investment.

The Commission also recommended the continuation of dialogue on Iran with other partners. These recommendations allowed the Council to authorize, in accordance with Article 300(1) of the Treaty, an openness towards the requisite negotiations; which helped prepare the grounds for strengthening of the foundations of Iran-EU relations.

The development of closer EU-Iran relations could help promote the reform process in Iran and contribute to greater regional stability. Iran had indicated that it was ready to discuss different issues, which was a positive sign, since any future contractual relations with Iran would inevitably have to include discussion on those issues.



In addition, Iran was also ready to discuss security issues, including regional security, and had begun to do so with some EU Member States. It was in the mutual interest of the EU and Iran to develop closer ties, politically and economically, as well as in areas like environment, drugs and migration.

Post-2005 Developments

As it happened, the 2005 presidential elections in Iran came to have quite significant impact on both domestic and foreign levels. The end of the reform period under President Khatami also signaled a hasty detachment from the ongoing approach and policy towards the relations with the EU. The change showed itself most prominently in the nuclear issue, which had already suffered due to lack of positive response on the part of Iran to the EU package for long-term agreement¹. From the EU point of view, that agreement would have provided Iran with everything it needed to develop a modern civil nuclear power program. It was also considered to open the way to a new relationship with Iran based on mutual respect and expanded cooperation in political and economic fields, while meeting international concerns about the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program. Impasse in the nuclear negotiations between Iran and the EU-3 - which later developed into 5+1 with the addition of the US, Russia and China – finally led to the IAEA's referral of the case to the UN Security Council in early 2006. The Council's direct involvement in the matter through the adoption of a sanctions resolution, under Article 41 of the Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, changed the situation drastically. As recalled by an EU Council document in 2007² the proposals offered to Iran a couple of years earlier, in return for suspension of enrichment and reprocessing activities, was aimed at finding a way for Iran to fulfill those requirements without further action at the UN Security Council.

Looking back, all of us know fully well how things have unfolded. While joining the US-led campaign of successive Security Council resolutions on Iran, including the latest in June 2010, the EU



has expressed on various occasions its commitment to a diplomatic solution, and reiterated that the package of previous proposals continue to remain on the table. From the EU point of view, should Iran decide to suspend all its enrichment-related activities and implement the Additional Protocol, the way to negotiation would be reopened and action in the Security Council would be suspended.³ As underlined in EU pronouncements, the EU still

remains committed to building a long-term relationship with Iran, which would depend, from their vantage point, on progress on all issues of concern, including terrorism, Iran's approach to the Middle East peace process and other regional issues.

B. New Problems or Predicaments in Iran-EU Relations

Having dealt in broad terms with the foundations of the relations between Iran and the EU, let me now turn to the difficulties that have emerged in the relations as a result of disagreements in more recent years. Fact of the matter is that the earlier solid, deep foundations in the relations have become quite shaky or uncertain. As all of us would concur, emergence of difficulties - of different kinds - is quite possible in every bilateral relationship. But, the characteristics of the recent - and still ongoing - growing difficulties or predicaments in Iran-EU relations emanating from the emergence and deepening of areas of divergence and serious disagreement call for urgent attention - and needless to say, by both sides. I am afraid that if not attended to and addressed, the foundations of relations and mutual interests would suffer further and the characteristics of these foundations would change from depth and strength to uncertainty and weakness, and the overall tendency from stability to tumult.

The new dilemmas and emerging problems - predicaments - in Iran-EU relations which, in my view, seriously threaten the future of these relations as just alluded to could be classified under the following broad categories.



2. Growing offensive Fright or Scariness

This problem, emanating from change of intense feelings of threat and fear into feelings of *hatred*, *malice* and *phobia*, has led to the emergence, among others, of the following phenomena – with quite serious implications and repercussions.

- Growing *Iran phobia* in the region and its further deliberate exacerbation;

- Propagation of the specter of sudden terror in Europe; e.g., fear of Iranian missiles (like the “threat” of Soviet missiles in the Cold War days), and

- Depiction of the “other” as grotesque, ludicrous, or extremely unpleasant, including through such derogatory name-calling as “Axis of Evil”, “origin or root cause of terror” etc.

3. Growing Social Distance or Gap

Unlike the preceding predicament, which appears to be worsening between our two peoples and is aimed at shaking the foundations of our relations, this problem comes from creating social distance between us. The latest EU Council Decision, as recent as July 2010, provides a comprehensive package of robust, biting measures in the areas of trade, financial services, energy, and transport, further supplemented by additional designations for visa ban and asset freeze, among others.⁴ These measures correspond to and fully reflect the aims and intentions of the European Council in the following areas:

- Decreasing cultural relations;
- Restricting trade and business⁵,
- Limiting scientific and scholarly exchange⁶,
- Reducing number of visas;
- Diminishing number of students; and
- General lessening of a wide range of social contacts.



4. Growing Institutional Obstacles

This predicament, consisting of legal and institutional obstacles, appears to aim at further institutionalization and deepening of social distance, through, inter alia:

- Creating EU institutional and legal barriers;
- Systematic weakening of bilateral relations in various fields and areas, including at the level of people to people exchanges; and
- Institution of barriers geared to effecting long-term social and political distance between the two sides.

As things stand now, it appears that there exists the will to maintain, promote, and even consolidate the three categories of problems just discussed, which, I am afraid, all of us would concur tend to reinforce each other further, without a countervailing will or even tendency to stop, much less reverse, them on the horizon or in near future. This new European outlook, and its active political-diplomatic pursuit, much to the detriment of the EU's global role and its traditional efficient functionality, could as a matter of fact lead us to the threshold of an unfortunate situation and eventuality.

As I see it, the ongoing trend in relations, especially further erosion in the foundations of our bilateral relations, could lead to one of the two following scenarios.

C. Possible Future Scenarios for Iran-EU Relations

Based on an analysis of the state of past and present bilateral relations, and with a future-looking approach, two different scenarios could be predicted for the future relations.

I. Destructive Scenario

Unlike the 1995-2004 trend – and considering the nuances involved between the 1995-97 and 1998-2004 periods – continuation of the ongoing approach and policy, as reflected in the EU Council Decision of 26 July 2010, would most probably lead to situations such as:



1. Perpetuation of long-term sanctions,
2. Non-cooperation on regional conflicts; Iraq, Afghanistan, Middle East, and on the other regional situations of mutual interest,
3. Non-cooperation on global issues; multilateral issues in general and most prominently on the nuclear dossier; and
4. Possible military conflict.

II. Constructive Scenario

As an alternative to the possible negative scenario just discussed, a positive – constructive – scenario would, by definition, mean a return in general terms to the earlier trend during the 1995-2004 period. Such a return would also require rectification of the approaches, policies and measures that allowed the trend to be halted and totally reversed. In other words, resuscitation of the badly injured foundations of the bilateral relations would as well require putting in place of adequate arrangements and mechanisms that would serve to consolidate and safeguard the positive achievements and protect them against the ever-present challenge of reversibility, due to, inter alia, pull and push from external forces. The following could be considered as some of the requisite overall approaches required to this end – which, it goes without saying, calls for will, policy and action on both sides.

1. Removal of the negative characteristics, obstacles, and limitations put in place since 2005;
2. Re-establishment of a process of dialogue and understanding based on mutual respect for distinct civilizational and cultural identity of each other;
3. Preparation of equal grounds for discussions on a comprehensive set of issues of interest to both sides;
4. Adoption and execution of a sustained policy geared to the rectification of past and present negative images and the promotion of a proactive, engaging public opinion, especially at the people to people level and through active engagement of civil society actors and institutions, and



5. Differentiation between particular American and European outlooks and active pursual of the latter: promotion of comprehensive engagement as opposed to limited engagement and military action.

A. Conclusions

To conclude, I go back to the principal question raised right at the beginning of the presentation: What is the direction EU is pursuing its relations with Iran? Given the analysis I have presented, I presume the answer to the question is quite clear: EU's relations with Iran suffer from shaky foundations and growing predicaments. Worse yet, there exists little, if any, serious will towards halting the deteriorating trend, much less rectifying the trend or reversing it towards resuscitation of the positive, future-looking trend between 1995 and 2005.

Turning to a related question: where are EU and Iran leading their relations? The current trends on both sides do not appear to be reassuring at all, in fact the relations are going down a slippery road, even though deep-rooted historical foundations still hold the potential for an effective rebound towards mutual healing and reconciliation.

And coming to the possible future scenario for the relations, as discussed, they could go down towards practical extinction through further continuation of the current approaches and policies. Or alternatively, a constructive, proactive, and future-looking approach based on resolute will and requisite policies and measures re-build the tarnished, damaged relations anew.

And finally, are Iran-EU relations on the verge of extinction or are they approaching reconciliation? The answer depends, of course, on whether you are an optimist – which I happen and prefer to be – or a pessimist – as some others are. That aside, real politics, however judged, dictate their own way and logic, even in a discourteous way.



II

Which Strategy to Resolve Iran-West Problems?

Nasser Hadian*

I would basically discuss the issues of concern between us and the West – which I grant is vaguely defined - present an overall view on Iran's main foreign policy objectives, and then I would discuss more thoroughly the contours of the strategy needed to resolve the issues of concern to both sides.

First, let me address the issues of concern between Iran and the West. I am sure many Europeans still share, to a large extent, these concerns with the U.S – an I am aware of the nuances involved and the difference of policies between the U.S. and Europeans. The major concerns, as we all know, comprise of Iran's nuclear program; the issues of terrorism and radicalism; the Middle East peace process; and finally the issue of human rights in Iran. These are the issues which the West proper usually raise in their dealings with Iran. Iranians also have their own set of issues: sanctions; Iranian frozen assets; non-recognition of Iran's regional role; lack of transparency in the aims and operations of NATO and U.S. forces and bases in Iran's security environment; and expeditious exit of U.S. and NATO forces from Afghanistan and Iraq. There are also a set of issues in which both sides have common interests; which include Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and at a more fundamental level, security in the Persian Gulf, including the question of safe passage of oil.

So, in general terms, these are basically the main issues involved. Of course, you may add some other issues to the list as you wish. But, the question then becomes: what are the strategies to address, and hopefully, to resolve these issues. In so far as the West, particularly, the U.S., are concerned, four strategies have been adopted and

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pursued in dealing with Iran and towards achieving their goals and resolving the issues at stake. These four strategies are: comprehensive engagement; containment; selective engagement plus containment; and finally, military action. The overriding perception here; that is, on the Iranian side, is that the policy adopted and pursued by the U.S., which has been also followed by others, has been selective engagement plus containment. This has been the U.S. policy since the times of former Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, and Defense Secretary, Robert Gates. They supported that approach and policy, which, ironically and despite President Obama's pronouncements regarding dealing with Iran with open hands, is still the U.S. policy. So, Iran's strategy has been counter-containment, which is a reactive policy. Having dealt closely with Iran- U.S. relations for the past 15-16 years, my experience tells me that the only strategy that stands a realistic chance of success; that is, a strategy that works, is comprehensive engagement. With respect to confidence building measures, I disagree with the suggestion that resolving outstanding issues one by one would help the situation and move it forward. As a matter of fact, we have tried this approach in the past – and many times at that. But, despite some success in each case, the experience does not seem to be reassuring. Just to cite an example, let me refer to the visit to Iran of the American wrestlers, in the course of which the American flag was raised and the U.S. national anthem was played in Iran – almost unthinkable previously and certainly now. What did such a move achieve? So, we have been there before, and there have been a lot of confidence building measures, which have been sabotaged, due to one factor or another, along the way. Given this not-so-reassuring experience, this is my belief that what is lacking – has been lacking – is the necessary political will on both sides to address and resolve the issues. Taking cue from other experiences, one could say that something like the Shanghai Declaration would be appropriate to consider. As for resolving issues one by one, for example, Afghanistan or Iraq, as things stand now, Iran does not



appear to be currently under tremendous pressure to feel compelled to move towards resolving any one of these issues. On the contrary, these two situations seem to be matters of immediate and urgent concern for NATO and the U.S., and not Iran. The reasonable question would be: why should Iran help resolve a problem situation in its vicinity that would put the other side in a more advantageous position in negotiating with Iran than is currently the case.

With these in mind, I tend to believe that comprehensive engagement is the right strategy to help both sides move in the direction of resolving the array of issues of concern to them. Alternatively, one could address each of the three other strategies and dissect them in terms of the track record and the reasons for their failure thus far, including the military option strategy. As everybody here knows fully well, over the past few years a wide range of scenarios have been entertained – even have been considered at more serious levels – in the U.S., and have been practically pushed off the table due to a host of reasons. One such strategy is what is called “surgical operation” which, according to the blueprint, would target anything from 100 to 140 targets inside Iran, with the purported objective that such military action would delay Iran's nuclear program. It has been argued amply by American and other sources that due to the uncertainty of the outcome, engaging in a venture would be an extremely hard decision to make for the Israelis, Americans, and NATO, for that matter. A number of quite risky considerations seem to be involved. Aside from the rather pervasive doubt as to existence of Iran's clandestine sites which would question the efficacy of any surgical operation in the first place, the political fallout in Iran would by all accounts be quite cataclysmic; it would convince or pacify the political and military quarters inside Iran who oppose the weaponization of the nuclear program. Rather, they might find it much easier to openly espouse the weaponization track as the only right path forward. I am sure the wiser souls in the West would consider such a venture too risky and costly to allow hotheads in the U.S., or in Israel,



for that matter, to engage in this kind of military adventure.

Another military scenario considers attacking between 1000 and 1400 targets inside Iran for a sustained period of 30 to 60 days, the purported objective of which would be substantially cutting down of Iran's military-technological capability. Again, as argued by various Western sources and quarters, this is much riskier than the first "limited" scenario. Results are unknown, and moreover, possible destabilization of Iran is hardly considered in anybody's real, long-term interest, hence, likewise, it is not expected to be any easy decision for the Israelis, Americans or NATO to make. The third military scenario calls for a total or comprehensive war - which, due to a host of reasons, including lack of requisite resources available to both the U.S or NATO, aside from the incalculable political fallout and ramifications for the greater region surrounding Iran – could be considered practically out of question and not taken serious even by the most belligerent supporters of the military option.

Returning to my earlier emphasis on comprehensive engagement as the only strategy that stands chance of success in dealing with Iran, my last point would be on how we can help promote this strategy – and I should add, on both sides. Drawing on my personal experience with Iran-U.S. relations – as already mentioned - in particular with Track-II diplomacy for the past decade or so, and given the not-so-favorable prevailing atmosphere at the time, I think this Track still appears to present the most appropriate, in fact, viable framework for action and interaction for addressing the issues of mutual concern. For instance, while it is quite easy for some of us Iranians – like myself – to engage in free-flowing discussions and exchange of views on such sensitive matters as Iran's missile program, including the range of Iranian missiles and their deployment, that would be extremely difficult for the Track-I negotiation to address and deal with such matters. What happened last year at the October meeting in Geneva between Iran and 5+1, where Jalili agreed – even if on an ad hoc basis – to a certain



arrangement that proved difficult to implement when he returned back home shows the inherent difficulties with Track I negotiations. Now, we know fully well how costly and cumbersome that initial agreement and subsequent backing down proved for both sides.

My very final word would be to underline the merits of Track-II diplomacy for exploring the potential for progress and looking for possible answers for concrete issues and problems. Once Track-II arrives at a possible course of action or solution for an issue or problem, it could be proposed to Track-I for further pursuit at a more serious, official level. For, at the end of the day, it is Track-I that sits at the driver's seat and is in charge of formalizing agreements – albeit arrived at through Track-II. I believe we – and I mean, on both sides - should henceforth lend our hand to a process like the Shanghai Declaration and, in so far as Iran-West problems are concerned, espouse the strategy of comprehensive engagement.

Notes

1. Despite tangible improvement in the state of relations, it is be noted that as of early 2001 EU did not have any contractual relations with Iran – as clearly underlined in a communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council [COM(2001)71]. The Agreement with Iran, dating back to the time of the Shah, had ended in 1977.
2. The Working Group on Energy met for the first time in Tehran in May 1999; the second meeting was organized in Brussels in March 2001. Following the Tehran meeting, Iran joined the Commission-funded INOGATE program. In addition, Iran participated as an observer in the Tacis-funded TRACECA-east-west land communication program. In its Green Paper on the security of energy supply (COM(2000)/769), the Commission stressed the need to establish an on-going dialogue with energy-producing countries in order to increase market transparency and price stability. EU energy discussions with Iran took place within the framework of the Producer-Consumer Dialogue.
3. Expert Meeting on Drugs was first held in December 1999, in which a small project financed, with two others to be examined later (Council Reg. No. 2046/97).
4. Expert Meeting on Refugees, held in April 1999, dealt with the situation of Afghan and Iraqi refugees in Iran, and examined ongoing projects with UNHCR and ECHO (Council Reg. No. 443/97).
5. Working Group on Trade and Investment met for the first time in Tehran in late November 2000.
6. It should be mentioned that there were some actions relating to human rights which could be developed in the future.

References

1. http://www.eeas.europa.eu/iran/docs/iran_council_2004-08_en.pdf
2. http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/external_relations/relations_with_third_countries/middle_east/r16004_en.htm; Last updated: 07.05.2007;
3. The EU Council has also reiterated its commitment to exercise utmost vigilance in the application of existing export control mechanisms for sensitive material so as to prevent the transfer of goods, technology and materials that might be used, directly or indirectly, in fissile material programs and missile programs.



4. Council conclusions on Iran's nuclear program; 3029th FOREIGN AFFAIRS Council meeting; Brussels; 26 July 2010;
5. In accordance with the European Council Declaration, Member States should exercise restraint in entering into new short-term commitments for public- and private-funded financial support for trade with Iran with a view to reducing outstanding amounts...and should prohibit any medium- and long-term commitment for public- and private-funded financial support for trade with Iran.
6. Member States shall, in accordance with their national legislation, take necessary measures to prevent specialized teaching or training of Iranian nationals, within their territories or by their nationals, of disciplines which would contribute to Iran's proliferation-sensitive nuclear activities and development of nuclear weapon delivery systems.