



EXCLUSIVE 5  
Many Spaniards interested in learning Persian language



EXCLUSIVE 6  
Immortality would produce its own set of problems

## FM: Iran seeks removal of all sanctions inconsistent with JCPOA

Political Desk

The Iranian foreign minister reiterated Tehran's position on the need for removing all the sanctions inconsistent with the 2015 nuclear deal and paying attention to the Islamic Republic's red lines in the talks in Vienna on the restoration of the deal.

Hossein Amir-Abdollahian made the remarks in an address to a Friday meeting with his Dutch counterpart, Wopke Hoekstra, in Munich on the sidelines of the 58th Munich Security Conference (MSC), where the two sides also exchanged views on the latest state of the Vienna talks, according to Press TV.

Iran and the Netherlands, Amir-Abdollahian said, should work to bring their views closer and implement bilateral agreements to further develop their relations.

Hoekstra expressed hope that an agreement would be reached in Vienna as soon as possible and stressed Amsterdam's preparedness to expand its ties with Tehran. The Dutch foreign minister also voiced hope to visit Tehran soon.

### 'Consider Iran's red lines'

In another meeting on Friday, Amir-Abdollahian said Iran has called on the remaining participants to the deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), to consider the Islamic Republic's red lines and avoid using media hype to sway negotiations in Vienna.

Making the remarks during a meeting with his German counterpart, Annalena Baerbock, the Iranian foreign minister noted that from the first day of the Vienna talks, Iran has been resolutely determined to reach a good agreement.

"The Islamic Republic expects the Europeans and [other] JCPOA parties to carefully consider Iran's

## Russia: 'We are close to successful completion of talks'



Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian (3rd R) holds talks with his German counterpart, Annalena Baerbock (2nd L), in Munich, Germany, on February 18, 2022.

red lines and after years of inaction try to play an effective role in securing the legitimate rights of Iran as a party that was affected by the United States' unilateral and illegal withdrawal" from the JCPOA, he said.

The top Iranian diplomat also rejected claims on the imposition of fictitious deadlines in the Vienna talks and stressed, "Tehran is taking heed of both the quality of an agreement and the element of time. If Iran's legitimate demands are taken into account today, an agreement can be reached in Vienna."

He further underlined the need for the opposite side not to make a miscalculation in the final days of the Vienna discussions by creating media hype.

Pointing to the history of relations between Iran and Germany in some areas of mutual interest, Amir-Abdollahian expressed Tehran's readiness to hold a joint commission at the earliest agreed upon time and expand bilateral economic, political,

cultural and scientific ties, as well as cooperation in the technical field and between the two countries' private sectors.

The German foreign minister welcomed the expansion of all-out bilateral relations and emphasized Berlin's resolve in this regard.

She also said that the negotiations in Vienna have reached a critical stage and that it is necessary for all parties to do their best to pass the current level in the shortest possible time and open a new chapter.

Iran's rights should be respected while efforts must be stepped up towards a good agreement in Vienna, Baerbock added.

Moreover, in a Saturday meeting with his Swedish counterpart, Ann Linde, in Munich, Amir-Abdollahian highlighted Iran's resolve to reach a good agreement in Vienna in case the other parties fulfill their commitments, according to official news agency IRNA.

In a meeting on the same day with Italian Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio, Amir-Abdollahian said Iran is resolved to reach a good agreement in the shortest time; but it completely depends on the U.S. will and behavior as well as Europe's attention to the principles and laws of negotiation whether such an agreement would be reached in a few days or a few weeks.

### West's choice

In another meeting with his Austrian counterpart, Alexander Schallenberg, Amir-Abdollahian thanked the country for hosting the nuclear negotiations, saying, today, Vienna is a center of developments in important areas for Iran and the international community.

Reiterating the importance of Iran's red lines and warning against any failure to consider them, he noted that if the final options for the Islamic Republic would be not reaching an agreement,

on the one hand, and turning a blind eye to its people's interests, on the other, Tehran's definite choice will be respecting national interests.

Describing as inevitable the principle for the sustainability of any agreement striking and maintaining a balance between rights and responsibilities, the Iranian foreign minister said, at present, the Western sides must make their final decisions as to whether they want to put an end to their ongoing economic terrorism, inaction and nonfulfillment of promises, or still seek to let the issue remain a bone of contention by giving unacceptable pretexts.

He stressed that launching media campaigns by the United States and the E3 will not impact the absolute mission of the Iranian negotiating team, which is to protect the interests and rights of the country's people.

Schallenberg said the final steps in negotiations normally becomes very tough and, at times, herculean, noting that no progress may be made on some days, but "we all have to make efforts to reach an agreement".

Upon arrival in Germany on Friday, Amir-Abdollahian expressed hope that the Vienna talks would lead to a "good agreement" in the near future.

He added, "We are still facing a number of unresolved issues in the Vienna talks, which are being continued in the Austrian capital with seriousness and the goal of arriving at a good agreement with [Iran's top negotiator] Bagheri Kani and my colleagues."

Amir-Abdollahian added that for the post-agreement era, Iran must hold talks with different countries to get prepared for the other parties' return to their commitments and implementation of what was agreed upon under the JCPOA, which was signed in 2015.

Continued on Page 2

EXCLUSIVE

## INTERVIEW

### MSC good opportunity for Iran to discuss different issues: Former envoy

International Desk

The Iranian foreign minister's presence in the ongoing 58th Munich Security Conference (MSC) is a good opportunity for exchanging views on different issues, including Tehran's peaceful nuclear program, said a former ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Germany.

Making the remark in an exclusive interview with Iran Daily, Alireza Sheikh-Attar added that Hossein Amir-Abdollahian has so far held talks with, among others, his German, Dutch, Swedish, Indian, Italian and Austrian counterparts on the sidelines of the MSC.

Commenting on Tehran's relations with Berlin, he said Germany knows Iran very well, adding that after the issues regarding the Islamic Republic's nuclear activities are resolved, the two countries will be able to expand cooperation using their considerable capacities.

The full text of the interview follows:



### IRAN DAILY: Would you please comment on the MSC's status and importance in international relations?

**ALIREZA SHEIKH-ATTAR:** In the mid-1960s, when the Cold War had reached its peak, it was decided at the Germans' initiative to hold a nongovernmental conference.

At that time, the major issues were those related to the Cold War. However, as time passed by, the conference became a venue for exchanging views and greater familiarity among the United States, the Soviet Union and their allies in the Eastern and Western blocs. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, other issues also began to be discussed at the conference as the world had become different from what it was and other countries were being invited to take part in the meeting. As far as I remember, since 2003, when Iran's nuclear program became a globally important issue, Tehran has also been invited to the conference.

Iran has normally sent a deputy foreign minister to take part in the conference. In 2008, when I was appointed Iran's ambassador to Berlin, I felt that the conference could serve as a venue to get informed about different views. After lobbying with the conference's top officials, I noticed that they were also very interested in seeing a senior Iranian official attend the event on a regular basis and expound on the Islamic Republic's stances.

Since normally close to 400 guests attend the conference annually, not everyone gets the chance to deliver a speech at the event. Nevertheless, following my talks with the conference's officials, they sent two invitation letters for the then Iranian Parliament speaker Ali Larijani and foreign minister Manouchehr Mottaki. Eventually, Mr. Larijani traveled to Munich at the head of a delegation and delivered a speech at the conference. In addition to providing Iran with the opportunity to deliver a speech, the host also organized a roundtable discussion attended by Mr. Larijani on the sidelines of the main event. The quality of the program was unprecedented.

This year, Amir-Abdollahian has taken part in the conference. The MSC is a very important opportunity for Iran to declare its stances and attitudes toward different issues. In addition to that, the meetings held on the sidelines of the conference are also very important for discussing bilateral as well as regional and international issues.

### Ukraine appears to be the central issue at this year's conference. What do you think would be the main pivots of the Iranian foreign minister's talks with his foreign counterparts?

The issue of Ukraine is currently the most important topic of all international gatherings, including the MSC. The Russians, of course, do not have a representative at this year's conference, which seems to be a message from Moscow to show its dissatisfaction with the policies the Western countries are pursuing against Russia. It is also likely that Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has failed to allocate time for taking part in the meeting due to his tight schedule.

As for Mr. Amir-Abdollahian's discussions, they could revolve around diverse issues, with the most important one being the declaration of Iran's stances on the nuclear issue and consultations for arriving at a conclusion in Vienna. Improving political and economic relations with other countries can also be among the important topics.

However, the conference is not a venue for finding solutions for different issues, as no decision is made in the MSC. Decisions are made by governments, or in official international meetings, such as those held by the United Nations. The MSC is mostly a place for exchanging views, and given the international media's significant presence, it is a good rostrum for different countries to inform the world's public opinion of their stances.

### On Friday, the Iranian foreign minister met his German counterpart, Annalena Baerbock, on the sidelines of the conference. Can the two countries expand their economic relations and cooperation?

Having relations with the United States, Israel and the European Union is among the principles of Germany's foreign policy. Germany is, however, different from countries like Britain in some aspects. London is obviously Washington's strategic ally, implementing almost completely the same policies adopted by the United States. To Germany, nevertheless, economic interests are very important. The country is the strongest and most industrial economy in Europe. The German economy is an export-oriented one. Germany has always eyed its presence in Iran's market and, until a few years ago, was the Islamic Republic's main trade partner. They had even made investments in Iran. They are quite familiar with Iran, meaning that they see it as a high-potential country in light of its educated workforce.

In addition, given Iran's strategic location, Germany views the country as a hub or potential center for exports to the region's market of 400 million people. Germany is, thus, not very happy with U.S. policies against Iran and seeks to adopt cautious stances toward Tehran lest it fails to have a place in the country's market in the future.

Their stance toward Russia is the same. Germany is highly dependent on Russia for meeting its energy needs. Despite being an EU member, the country's top officials traveled to Moscow and held talks with their Russian counterparts. The Russians said they had noted some of Germany's proposals. Thus, Germany's policies are different from those of the United States and Britain. It has sought to simultaneously maintain its ties with the United States, as well as relations with Iran. Tehran and Berlin can definitely expand their relations and cooperation in a large number of areas. The revival and improvement of such relations, however, hinge on the fate of more important issues, such as that of the Vienna talks and sanctions removal.

### Do you maintain that Iran's participation in international conferences and meetings is in Iran's interests?

Yes, definitely, as they provide the country with new opportunities. The MSC is probably the most important international meeting following the annual session of the United Nations General Assembly.

## Iran urges end to Zionist regime's 'apartheid policies' against Palestinians

Political Desk

Iran called on the international community to support the people of Palestine, urging an end to the Zionist regime's demolition of Palestinians' homes and occupation of their lands.

Condemning the Israeli regime's racist policies forcing the Palestinian people living in the flashpoint neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah to leave their homes, the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said on Saturday that the destruction of Palestinians' houses and confiscation of their lands come as a continuation of the apartheid policies of the child-killing Israeli regime, IRNA reported.

He expressed solidarity with the Palestinian people as the main and true residents of this ancient land and the cradle of divine religions, urging the international community and organizations to fulfill their legal and human commitments in this regard.

Tensions heightened across the Palestinian territories last Sunday, when Israeli forces and illegal settlers renewed their attacks against Palestinians



Israeli policemen try to clear Palestinians and activists gathering to demonstrate in the flashpoint neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah on February 18, 2022.

in Sheikh Jarrah. The neighborhood has been the scene of frequent crackdowns by the Israeli regime forces on the Palestinians protesting against the threatened expulsion of dozens of families from their homes in favor of Israeli settler groups, according to Press TV.

The initial tensions that erupted in Sheikh Jarrah last year, in part, sparked a May 2021 war between

the Israeli regime and resistance groups in the Gaza Strip.

The Palestinian resistance movement Hamas on Thursday warned Israel against crossing "red lines" in Sheikh Jarrah or any other area in the occupied Al-Quds.

The Palestinian Information Center cited senior Hamas official Basem Na'im as saying that the crossing of Hamas' red lines in Sheikh Jarrah, Al-Aqsa Mosque, or any other area in the occupied Al-Quds would have "serious repercussions."

### Hamas call

In a Saturday statement, Hamas called for active participation locally and globally in International Quds Week.

The Palestinian resistance movement called on Muslims to actively attend the event, which is scheduled to be held from February 25 to March 4.

It hailed the global initiative in support of Al-Quds and Al-Aqsa Mosque as the focal centers of the fight against the Zionist enemy and support for the Palestinian cause.