

## Relations between the Islamic Republic Of Iran and the EU (1997-2005)

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### Abstract

EU is formed by powerful and high influence countries in different extents of policy, economy; military and etc. that show the status of EU in the world, while relations between Islamic Republic of Iran and EU has faced many ups and downs for a variety of reasons. Obviously, it seems necessary to establish relations between Iran and EU to meet the needs and interests of Iran as well as strengthening our position in the area of international relations. Different administration's policies in developing relations with Europe brought about varied and specific consequences. In the meantime, the current paper examines the seventh cabinet of Islamic Republic because of its difference foreign policy and new way to approach west. The current paper applies analytical method to study developments in relations between Iran and EU under the seventh and eighth reformist administration of Seyed Mohammad Khatami to figure out could provide Iran with more interests than previous administrations or not? And also what are the probable risks for Iran through relations with EU. The author has examined ups and downs of relations between Iran and EU under administrations prior to Seyed Mohammad Khatami administration and in end studies the relations in the reform course and achievements and difficulties face by this policy and prevent potential risks and also always there is problems that make the obstacle in stable relations between Iran and EU.

**Keywords:** Foreign policy, European Union, detente

### 1. Introduction

In the current situation Islamic Republic of Iran has begun a new chapter in relations with the West over the nuclear issue. The negotiations include economic issues in addition to the central issue of nuclear negotiations. Without a doubt; the result of the talks will be effective on the situation in Iran. EU is the most important and effective part in the current negotiations between Iran and the West.

### 2. Problem Statement

It is obvious that the EU is considered as both economic partner and political competitor for Islamic Republic of Iran in regional and international scenes. The member states of EU include in wealthy, industrial, and developed countries so that a lion share of commercial transactions of Iran have been with member states of this union particularly France and Germany during three past decades. France, England, and Italy are members of G8 (group of eight nations) and France and England are the permanent members of UN Security Council. The countries of European Nation are influentially present in some international economic- monetary organizations such as international Monetary Fund, World Bank, World Trade Organization and Economic Cooperation and Development Organization; hence, these countries have a high industrial power. Technology transfer is a considerable issue in accordance with its financial and credit collaboration power in civil and reconstruction programs of Islamic Republic of Iran. EU as a coherent collection that includes 27 independent countries has an important position in foreign policy of Islamic Republic of Iran.

Research Method: research method of this study is descriptive-analytical.

Research Type: according to the nature of research subject and use of obtained result to determine the effect on national profits of Iran, this study is an applied-fundamental research emphasizing on its fundamental aspect.

Analysis method: the applied method in this study to analyze the matters is method of "relying on theoretical topics" with the aim of achieving new approaches and extraordinary scrutiny within relevant issues to transitions of the relations between Islamic Republic of Iran and EU during 1997-2005.

It is required to study the background of the relations between this union and Iran in order to find the critical points of these relations and to analyze negotiations trend and their results. At first, the EU is briefly introduced and studied:

### **3. EU Situation**

The EU members have created it completely independent and authoritative (more than other international independent organizations). EU acts such a federation or confederation in some scopes; however, member states are legally (head of treaties). It means that union is not permitted to take power from countries adding it to its power without agreement of members through international treaties. Moreover, member states have passed up only a little from their national authority and independence in many scopes particularly important and key scopes such as foreign and defense affairs. Heads of European member states signed a treaty that enacts Constitution of Europe on October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2004 that was approved then by 13 member states, but in majority cases, the approval is based on parliamentary performance not public vote so that this process was undetermined and unstable on May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2005 when the voters of France rejected the Constitution with 55% vote against 45%. Netherlands rejected the Europe Constitution during a referendum with 61% vote three days later than France referendum about the Europe Constitution (Smith, 2005, 1113).

### **4. History and Emergence of European Union**

The Roman Empire centered in Mediterranean cannot be considered as an appropriate example for European Union. These two political institutes (Roman Empire and Europe Union) had not the same geographical position. Roman Empire consisted of some parts of Africa and Asia but it did not include a big part of Germany, Scandinavia, Scotland, and east of Europe. Roman Empire was forcibly expanded and controlled by a central State having few numbers of ideals and structures of Europe Union.

### **5. Strategy of Europe Union Formation**

Europe Union has geopolitically aspect in terms of history. A French Historian named Alexis de Tocqueville carried out some studies about Russia and America at the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century he wrote the famous LE AMERIQUE Book in which, Americans are called reapers because of extensive facilities of this country and Russians are called sword in hands because of the military power of Russia that was expanding its power using military power (Mojtahedzadeh, 2005, 12). He considers the world at 20<sup>th</sup> century with severe wars, Russia and The United States of America as world powers at the end of war so that the future world in 20th century will be divided between these competitors and these two powers will divide the world into two camps dominating on it, and it happened (Mojtahedzadeh, 2002, 206). General de Gaulle who were in prison of Nazis during World War II and read this book in prison impressed by it and as a smart person decided to start some measurements to prevent from this decision (Mojtahedzadeh, 2005, 12).

### **6. State Members of European Union**

EU includes 28 countries that are called state members including Austria, England, Spain, Estonia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Italy, Switzerland, Ireland, Germany, Great Britain, Belgium, Bulgaria, Portugal, Denmark, Romania, the Czech Republic, Sweden, France, Finland, Cyprus, Atuya, Luxembourg, Poland, Lithuania, Malta, Hungary, Netherlands and Greece and three formal candidates for membership in union are Croatia, Macedonia and Turkey. Moreover, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia are recognized as countries that are potential to be the member of union (Smith, 2004, 113).

### **7. Internal Policies of EU**

- Free trade of goods and services between member states
- Competition Act of EU that controls anti-competition activities of firms through anti-trust law and integration control as well as controlling anti-competition activities if state members through state helps systems
- Schengen treaty has prepared the possibility of removal of supervisions on domestic borders and adjusting the supervision on foreign borders among country members. This treaty would remove England and Ireland that have had degradation but covers non-member countries (Island and Norway) in Europe Union. Swiss positively voted in 2005 to be involved in Schengen area.

- Freedom of citizens of state members to live or work with their spouses and children elsewhere in Europe Union provided that they could support themselves.

## 8. Foreign Relations of the Islamic Republic of Iran

First, EU member states do not take the same stand towards Iran and the type of relations between the EU and Iran and each follow a different quantity and quality of the relations with Iran. Some only pursue political objectives in relations with Iran and economic goals are the priority for others. Thus, economic and political talks with EU is a difficult path to follow and will depend on internal variables, regional and international changes. Thus, a clear vision cannot be imagined in this context.

EU International status as well as the strategic regional role and position of the Islamic Republic of Iran requires for the establishment of a mutual relationship between the two sides. EU is an important part of the West and its member states are in strategic alliance with the US in principles and goals despite some commercial competition and different political tactics. At the same time, Europe sometimes reluctantly accepted the supremacy of the US.

EU International status as well as the geo-strategic regional role and position of the Islamic Republic of Iran and energy resources of Iran indicate the necessity to maintain mutual relations between the two sides. Of course this volatile relationship is with staggering challenges of issues such as human rights, weapons of mass destruction, terrorism and some regional issues.

The speed and extent of fundamental changes in the international system involves the foreign policy of countries to constantly assess their status in international system to follow their interests and bring appropriate strategies, and solutions into action. The presence of EU in the international affairs is as the most important changes and the Islamic Republic of Iran as a regional player in the Middle East is affected by and affects on, as well. In fact, other players seek to gain their interests through influencing on the developing system.

## 9. Foreign Relations

Foreign relations are to manage relations with other states, according to a government administration. The main objective of such organizations is to create, develop and manage foreign policy and thus define the relations from the perspective of national interests in the international environment.

## 10. Conclusion

Given that the main question of this study is that what interests and objectives have been pursued by Khatami administration (1998 to 2005) to promote relations with EU? Accordingly, it is assumed that during Khatami administration the relations between Islamic Republic of Iran of EU gained more importance in a wake of the president detente policy and dialogue among civilizations. In the period before the reforms, foreign policy in relations with EU can be summarized as:

- 1- During Mir Hossein Mousavi administration, Iran was in conflict with EU over the Iran-Iraq war, because most European countries were the main supporter of the Iraq.
- 2- During Hashemi Rafsanjani administration, in the post-war years, the country needed to get loans from other countries to rebuild the ravages of war and compensate for damages, so the government policy was to somewhat improved relations with EU member states.
- 3- Mohammad Khatami administration policy which was based on detente and dialogue of civilizations could largely establish friendly relations with EU to be able to meet Iran's national interests. In reviewing the Islamic Republic of Iran relations with the EU during Mohammad Khatami administration, we can say that relations between the parties developed based on new concepts and dominant discourse. Khatami pursued the foreign policy of detente, confidence-building, improving and expanding political and economic relations with the rest of the world, including EU. the policy of détente and the raise of the dialogue of civilizations by Seyed Mohammad Khatami in 1988 was welcomed warmly by different countries, especially European countries which led to commute of Europeans to meet with leaders of Iran and vice versa, and resulted in conversion of critical discussions to constructive and inclusive dialogue and European criticism of The U.S because of calling Iran the "axis of evil". In general, relations between Iran and Europe improved and expanded in Khatami administration compared to the prior administrations. However, with the nuclear issue, the relations between Iran and EU were thoroughly impressed and weakened in 2003

## 11. Suggestions

- 1- The states seeking mutual positive relations with in turn must maintain the Union interests, as countries pursue their national interests. Therefore, the Islamic Republic of Iran in its relations with EU should make attempts to attract most national interests at the lowest cost.
- 2- The appointment of experienced ambassadors to the EU can have a positive impact in improving mutual relations, because those with sufficient knowledge and relevant experience will be able to handle the relationship of this extent.
- 3- It seems necessary to develop and implement a comprehensive policy with sufficient stability in relations with EU, given the influence of EU in the economic, science, politics and so forth.
- 4- The administration should expand production in non-oil industrial processing and agricultural and livestock to reduce the rate of privileges offered in relations and leaving out of the possible pressures imposed by counterparts in international relations.

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