

**IRAN'S PERMANENT
MEMBERSHIP AT SCO:
EXPECTATIONS AND REALITY**

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Iran's Permanent Membership at SCO: Expectations and Reality

İran'ın ŞİÖ Daimî Üyeliği: Beklentiler ve Gerçekler

عضویت دائم ایران در سازمان همکاری شانگهای: انتظارات و واقعیتها

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CONTENTS

Introduction	6
1. An Overview of the SCO	7
2. Iran's Potential Gains From the SCO	9
3. Challenges Faced by Iran	12
Conclusion	14
References	15

Figures

Figure 1: Pillars of the SCO	7
Figure 2: Iran's Unilateral SCO Algorithm	10
Figure 3: Challenges Faced by Iran	13

Tables

Table 1: SCO Members and GDP	7
Table 2: Iran's Exports to SCO Members and Share in Their Imports (2020)	9

SUMMARY

- Iran was accepted as a permanent member at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Heads of State Summit held in Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan, on September 17, 2021, upon the proposal of China.
- Iran's full membership at the SCO is seen as a significant step in the context of "Look at East" and "Resistance Economy" foreign policies.
- Considering Iran's current economic and political situation, there are numerous opportunities that SCO will provide for Iran.
- Apart from these opportunities, there are also some obstacles, such as FATF and the sanctions, which will have an impact on Iran's full membership process at SCO and its performance after this process.
- Experts, bureaucrats, and business people believe that Iran will not take full advantage of SCO due to the relevant obstacles.

Keywords: SCO, Regional Cooperation, Economic Cooperation, FATF, Sanctions

ÖZET

- İran, 17 Eylül 2021'de Tacikistan'ın başkenti Duşanbe'de düzenlenen Şangay İşbirliği Örgütü (ŞİÖ) Devlet Başkanları Zirvesi'nde, Çin'in önerisi ile daimi üye olarak kabul edildi.
- "Doğu'ya Bak" ve "Direniş Ekonomisi"nin dış ticaret politikaları çerçevesinde İran'ın ŞİÖ'ye tam üyeliği önemli bir adım olarak görülmektedir.
- İran'ın mevcut ekonomik ve siyasi durumu göz önünde bulundurulduğunda ŞİÖ'nün İran için yaratacağı fırsatlar oldukça fazladır.
- Bu fırsatların yanında İran'ın ŞİÖ tam üyelik sürecini ve bu süreçten sonraki performansını etkileyecek FATF ve yaptırımlar gibi engeller de bulunmaktadır.
- Uzmanlar, bürokratlar ve iş insanları, İran'ın ŞİÖ'den söz konusu engeller sebebiyle tam olarak fayda sağlayamayacağını düşünmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: ŞİÖ, Bölgesel İş Birliği, Ekonomik İş Birliği, FATF, Yaptırımlar

چکیده

- در اجلاس سران کشورهای عضو سازمان همکاری شانگهای که در ۲۶ شهریور ۱۴۰۰ در دوشنبه پایتخت تاجیکستان برگزار شد، ایران با پیشنهاد چین به عضویت دائم این سازمان درآمد.
- عضویت دائم ایران در سازمان همکاری شانگهای، گام مهمی در راستای سیاست خارجی «نگاه به شرق» و «اقتصاد مقاومتی» تلقی می شود.
- با توجه به اوضاع سیاسی و اقتصادی ایران به ویژه در این اواخر، عضویت در سازمان همکاری شانگهای، فرصتهای متعددی را برای این کشور فراهم می سازد.
- با وجود این فرصتها، موانعی از قبیل نپیوستن به «اف ای تی اف» و تحریمها بر روند عضویت دائم این کشور در این سازمان و کارایی آن تأثیر خواهند گذاشت.
- از نظر کارشناسان، دولتمردان و بازرگانان، ایران به دلیل موانع متعددی نمی تواند از مزایای عضویت این سازمان بهره کامل ببرد.

کلیدواژه ها: سازمان همکاری شانگهای، همکاری منطقه ای، همکاری اقتصادی، اف ای تی اف، تحریمها



INTRODUCTION

On September 17, 2021, it was announced that Iran's permanent membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) was approved during the meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of State held in Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan, with China's suggestion. This membership, considered a significant step for Iran's economy and foreign policy, is seen as a sign that the Ebrahim Raisi administration will be in close political and economic relations with the "independent countries" in the eastern borders of Iran. As a matter of fact, in his speech to the summit in Dushanbe, Raisi emphasized the relations between the region's leading countries and the development and strengthening of infrastructure connections by saying that "The world has entered a new era. Hegemony and unilateralism are failing. The international balance is moving toward multilateralism and redistribution of power to the benefit of independent countries" (Dursun, 2021).

Permanent membership in the SCO also supports the policies of the economic resistance, which are considered as the economic policies targeted by Raisi, and Iran's membership should be evaluated in this context as well. The Resistance Economy doctrine, announced by the Supreme Leader

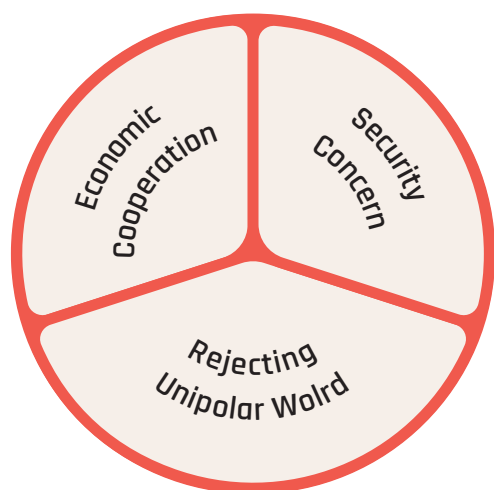
Ali Khamenei, aims to expand strategic relations with the world, especially with regional countries, develop cooperation and partnerships, benefit from the international and regional organizations' potentials with diplomacy to support economic goals in order to make the Iranian economy more resistant and reduce its vulnerability (Office of the Supreme Leader, 1392).

In this study, the structural and technical characteristics of the SCO and its potential benefits to Iran, as well as challenges and obstacles faced by Tehran, have been examined.

1. An Overview of the SCO

The SCO was launched in 2001 with the addition of Uzbekistan as an outgrowth of the Shanghai Five, which was founded in 1996 by the People's Republic of China, the Russian Federation, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan. Established with the aim to define the border disputes between China and Central Asia's newly-formed states and to deal with the new security threats that emerged with the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Figure 1: Pillars of the SCO



Source: Prepared by IRAM experts.

Table 1: SCO Members and GDP*

Countries	GDP (US\$ Billion)
China	14,632
India	2,500
Russia	1,416
Iran	410
Pakistan	320
Kazakhstan	206
Uzbekistan	108
Tajikistan	11
Kyrgyzstan	7
SCO Total	19,610
World	81,749

Source: World Bank, 2022

* Calculated with fixed prices in 2015 US\$.

SCO is a political organization with security priorities rather than economic motivation. Although SCO's priority is to address security threats and political issues, its vision has recently expanded and to reach a general agreement in the field of economy, through establishing a free-trade zone (FTZ) and economic integration, has become one of the top priorities.

SCO is one of the world's most prominent regional organizations in terms of higher economic capacity. The SCO members cover 43% of the world population. The overall revenue of the organization or the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) of member-states of the SCO accounts for 24% of the global GDP. SCO members signed 122 cooperation agreements that facilitate interaction between them in the fields of economy, trade, banking, finance and investment activities, manufacturing, agriculture, transportation, telecommunications, customs and tourism (Serikkaliyeva et al., 2018).

SCO member-states signed the first economic document, "Program of Multilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation", in 2003.

This program defines the fundamental goals of economic cooperation within the framework of the organization (Serikkaliyeva et al., 2018). The long-term objective of this document was to shape a new integrated economic space, including creating favorable conditions for trade and investments, till 2020. In the framework of this program, the SCO tried to gradually ensure the free movement of goods, the capital, services and technologies within the organization. It is clearly stated that the main purpose of this program is to pave the way for the creation of an SCO FTZ in the future (Kulikova, 2006). Following documents were signed in the SCO framework since its establishment (Serikkaliyeva et al., 2018):

- Long-term Program of Multilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation (2003)
- Action Plan for the Long-term Programme of Multilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation (2004)
- SCO Interbank Consortium (2005)
- SCO Business Council (2006)
- Action Plan for the Implementation of the Long-term SCO Program of Multilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation (2006)
- Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Customs Affairs (2007)
- New Action Plan for the Long-term Programme of Multilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation (2008)
- Agreement on Cooperation in Agriculture (2010)

In economic and financial affairs, SCO does not have a precise administrative mechanism like the European Union (EU) or other economic unions. The Organization has also not defined a specific mechanism for fiscal affairs. SCO members do not have a common currency or governing body like EU members. Although the Organization is contemplating the establishment of an SCO development bank and a

special account to fund financial support for the Organization, neither the bank nor a precise financial structure for banking transactions have been determined (Alimov, 2018). The SCO Interbank Consortium, established in 2005, is only a financial platform for cofinancing infrastructure projects, core industries, advanced technologies, export-oriented sectors, and social projects.

Bijan Khajehpour, an analyst focused on the Iranian economy, claims that the SCO Interbank Consortium could offer Iran advantages. Once a full member, Iran would also join the consortium and, in due course, secure some funding for its infrastructure projects. Furthermore, one banking-related aspect that will open new doors for Iran is the usage of digital currencies by the member-states for banking transactions. Most of SCO members are working on developing central bank digital currencies. Once that network of digital currencies starts to operate, there will be new opportunities for transacting funds between the member-states (Khajehpour, 2021). Iran, which allows the use of digital money in oil transactions to circumvent sanctions, can also seize this opportunity.

While examining the financial relations between the SCO members, China has come to the fore as the only country that provides loans to the member countries. For example, at the 2005 Astana summit in Kazakhstan, China, represented by President Hu Jintao, offered \$900 million preferential buyer's credit loans to the other SCO members in order to promote the economic development of the SCO member-states and deepen their economic cooperation. In 2006, the Export-Import (Exim) Bank of China signed preferential buyer's credit with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, providing \$1.2 billion of preferential buyer's credit in 2007. Moreover, China announced in 2012 that it would allocate another \$10 billion in governmental loans (Serikkaliyeva et al., 2018). Although SCO members such as Kyrgyzstan

and Tajikistan have received large loans from China, there is no information about whether China provides loans within the scope of the SCO or the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

In the last two decades, SCO member-states have tried to overcome trade barriers among themselves. In this context, China has offered to remove trade barriers and open its market to other members. In addition, at SCO summits, member-states have previously discussed to conduct bilateral trade in “common” and “national currencies” (Silk Road Briefing, 2020). However, countries have not yet reached an agreement on this issue. The absence of a precise mechanism in economic and financial affairs may be considered as the reason behind this disagreement.

2. Iran's Potential Gains From the SCO

It is expected that Iran's first economic gain from the SCO will be related to foreign trade. Although the SCO seems to be an important

export destination for Iran, Iran's share in the market is relatively low and it is unlikely that this share will rise considering the current non-trade barriers. According to the trade statistics, the total imports of China, India, Pakistan, Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in 2020 are approximately \$3.1 trillion. In the year 2020, Iran's exports to these eight countries amounted to 12.3 billion dollars. Comparing the statistics, Iran's share in the import market of SCO member-states is 0.39% (90 Eghtesadi, 1400).

Besides eight permanent members of the SCO, Iran has also trade relations with the observer states, including Mongolia, Afghanistan, and Belarus. In 1399 (2019-2020), China (1st), Afghanistan (5th), India (6th), Pakistan (7th), Russia (9th), Kazakhstan (17th), and Uzbekistan (19th) were among Iran's export destinations (Donya-e-Eqtasad, 1400a). According to the research titled “Assessing the Economic Effects of Iran's membership in the SCO” conducted by the Economics Department of the University of Isfahan, considering the ongoing sanctions

Table 2: Iran's Exports to SCO Members and Share in Their Imports (2020)

Countries	Iran's Exports (US\$ Billion)	Total Imports of SCO Members (US\$ Billion)	Iran's Share (%)
China	9.08	2,407.54	0.38
India	1.28	367.98	0.35
Pakistan	1.00	45.77	2.19
Russia	0.50	234.66	0.22
Kazakhstan	0.17	38.08	0.44
Uzbekistan	0.16	19.95	0.83
Kyrgyzstan	0.05	3.68	1.25
Tajikistan	0.02	3.14	0.52
Total	12.26	3,120.80	0.39

Source: 90 Eghtesadi, 1400



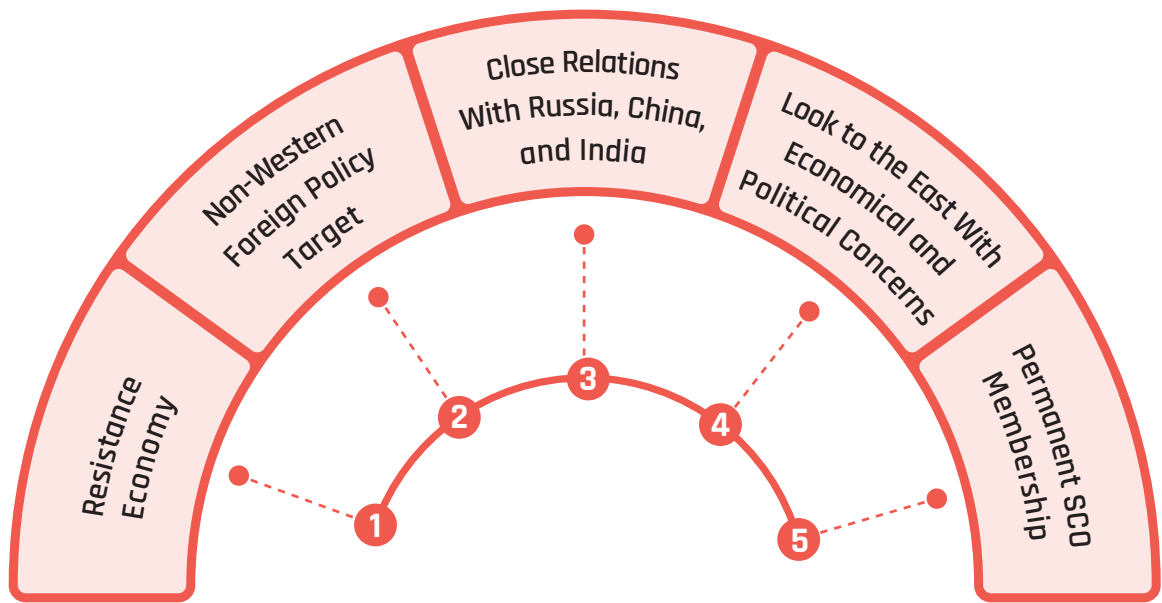
and negative trade relations with Europeans, the Asian powers are currently one of the best options despite the sanctions (Mardiha et al., 2020).

In addition, the research suggests that considering eliminating or decreasing tariff rates, Iran's full membership in the SCO will increase the welfare and trade in the Shanghai bloc (Mardiha et al., 2020). For this reason, as the first run-up area to enter the international competition arena, economic integrations such as SCO are important for Iran in the field of trade. Because in such a framework, removing trade barriers and tariffs in the region, countries can access to larger markets. Benefitting from its comparative advantages and different economic capabilities, Iran can create the necessary space in this field and increase its ability to progress towards globalization by gaining different experiences from various economic-regional integrations (Donya-e-Eqtesad, 1400a). SCO members are

also involved in several other projects. For instance, China initiated BRI while the Central Asian countries led by Russia established the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) with a specific economic mechanism. With Iran's permanent membership in the SCO, both of these projects could have a major impact on the Iranian economy (Mehr News, 1394). In other words, the BRI can strengthen Iran's transit position and the EAEU can increase Iran's trade with member-states by taking advantage of common customs tariffs.

SCO members, as mentioned before, accounts for 27.1% of the global GDP. Without a shadow of a doubt, China and India have a critical role in this share. Thus, pursuant to Iran's "Look to the East" policy, the SCO could be a good chance to further expand economic and political relations with the Asian powers. Iran hopes to use the economic potential of the SCO to expand its trade-economic relations with Asia's two economic powers, India and China.

Figure 2: Iran's Unilateral SCO Algorithm



Source: Prepared by İRAM experts.

In 1399 (2019-2020), while China accounts for 67% of Iran's trade with SCO countries worth approximately 26 billion dollars, India accounts for almost 15% (Efhami, 1400). Thus, the permanent membership in the SCO paves the way for Iran to establish closer relations with two economic powers, India and China.

In 2016, nearly 11% of the world's total Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) were made by the SCO member-states (Alimov, 2018). In contrast to the other member-states, China came to the fore as the leading economic power in this field. According to the 2019 statistics, China's FDI in the SCO region has annually increased by 144% since 2008 (Dovgalyuk, 2019). Therefore, as part of the SCO and Iran-China 25-Year Comprehensive Cooperation Agreement, it is possible that Iran will attract more Chinese FDI.

Cooperation in the energy sector is one of the most important cooperation areas in the SCO. In 2004, for the first time, SCO adopted an action plan for the program related to energy and transportation cooperation (Kulikova, 2006). Later, with Russian President Vladimir Putin's proposal, the SCO Energy Club was established in 2006 with the aim of coordinating supply and balancing the 'producers and consumers' interest. The then President of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, suggested that Tehran and Moscow can jointly set the price for gas and the main direction of its flow (Brummer, 2007, p. 187). The main objective of the SCO Energy Club is to market the important oil and gas resources of the member countries in the region, which is home to 25% of the world's oil and 30% of its total natural gas reserves. By setting up the Energy Club, Russian aims to access or find a consumer market for SCO's energy products. Thus, considering the energy reserves in the member-states, it seems natural that energy will be one of the main axes of the Organization's activities in the coming years (Shokri, 2021).

Considering the extent of the SCO's share in the world energy portfolio, including Iran's permanent membership, would substantially increase Organization's natural gas and oil assets. Moreover, combining Iran's natural gas and oil reserves with the growing energy demand of China and India, it may be claimed that Iran can sell oil in case of creating a new mechanism for oil trade (in national currencies) by the SCO. The establishment of a mechanism for the use of the national currency in oil markets may also pave the way for overcoming sanctions. In addition, according to the Iranian Oil Minister, Javad Owji, Iran will use its own capacity to increase exports to China- with oil and energy production. Therefore, it is possible that with Iran's permanent membership in the SCO, the opportunity to trade in the national currencies of the two countries will increase and China will return to Iran's energy projects.

Abolfazl Zohrevand, Iran's former ambassador to Italy and Afghanistan, claimed that there is a gas pipeline that goes directly from Russia, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan to China. Although Turkmenistan is not a SCO member, but the Central Asia-China Gas Pipeline starts in this country and ends in China via SCO territory. Thus, this gas pipeline can be used to transport gas to China (Tahlil Bazaar, 1399). It should be noted that the energy cooperation between Iran and Turkmenistan has some problems and even both countries have referred the disputes to international arbitration. Furthermore, approximately 70% of Iran's energy production, which is mostly comprised of natural gas, is consumed domestically (Tejarat News, 1400). With such a huge domestic consumption volume, it seems unlikely that Iran will export natural gas to China in extensive amounts. However, in the coming years, the Central Asia-China Gas Pipeline would be an additional opportunity for Iran in case Iran has a sufficient amount of free gas capacity for export to China.



Iran functions as a link between three geo-economic infrastructure projects in the region: The International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), the southern route of the BRI/SREB (Silk Road Economic Belt) corridors, and the Chabahar Port in Southeast Iran. For Tehran, the realization of the INSTC is a strategic priority as with the implementation of the INSTC, it will become a bridge between Russia and India, the two major economies of Asia, in the North and South of Eurasia (Shariatinia, 2021).

Coupled with this, China considers the SCO as a regional trade and investment facilitator for the BRI. The China-Central Asia-West Asia Corridor, one of the corridors of the BRI, passes through Iran. Although this corridor has not yet been implemented, with its implementation Iran will strengthen its position in the BRI and this will provide Iran greater access to the Central Asian and Eurasian markets.

Through INSTC, Iran can serve as a bridge between the South and the North and connect Central Asia and Russia to India. Iran is located on the route of one of the BRI/SREB corridors, which can use this advantage to connect East and West Asia. In addition, Iran's Chabahar Port has the potential to become a regional trade hub for SCO members (Donya-e-Eqtasad, 1400b). Thereupon, with the expansion of Iran's commercial relations with SCO member countries, these initiatives will increase Iran's geo-economic and transit importance. Likewise, the geo-economic cooperation between India, Russia, and Iran under the SCO's roof could save the Chabahar Project, which has been marginalized in Afghanistan since the Taliban came to power. The Taliban takeover of Kabul seriously affected the Chabahar Project so that Afghanistan may withdraw from the trilateral agreement with Iran and India. However, Iran's permanent membership in the SCO could further increase the opportunity to strengthen

cooperation between Russia, Iran, and India. Therefore, strengthened cooperation between these countries can save the Chabahar Project from the brink of the abyss.

In transportation, SCO members also signed the Agreement on International Road Transportation Facilitation in 2014. The agreement provides for simple methods (such as mutual recognition of driver's licenses, tariff and non-scheduled transit for operators) for the movement of goods in member-states (Dovgalyuk, 2019). With its permanent membership in the SCO, Iran can use the advantages of this agreement and solve its transit and export problems with the countries in the region. Additionally, Iran has been trying to participate in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project for many years. If cooperation within the SCO expands further, the country's permanent membership in the Organization and emerging opportunities may facilitate Tehran's participation in CPEC.

3. Challenges Faced by Iran

It is expected that Iran's permanent membership in the SCO will potentially affect many economical channels, notably the trade. For instance, Iranian businessmen and economists, such as the Head of Iran Export Confederation Mohammad Lahouti, made remarks that by joining the SCO, Iran would be connected to the large markets of the member-states, and it could achieve positive results as a regional power in various trade, transit, and energy fields by developing economic relations with these countries (Eghtesad Online, 1400). However, the fact that Iran has not yet ratified the FATF (Financial Action Task Force) and the banking sanctions are the most critical factors affecting the potential gains. Moreover, all SCO member-states, excluding India, are also members of the Eurasian Group (EAG),

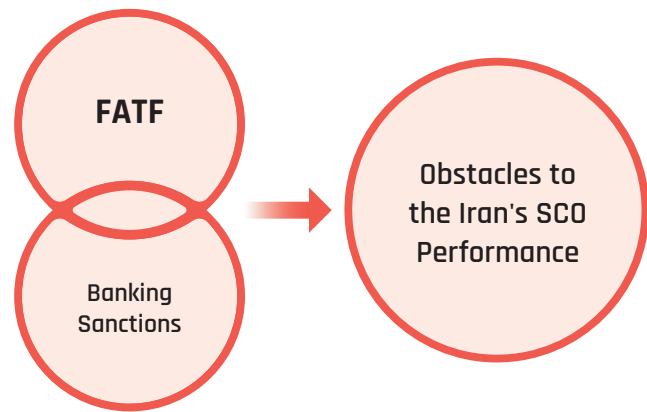
a regional body of the FATF. The EAG, established in 2004 at the initiative of the Russian Federation, supported by the IMF and World Bank, plays an important role in combating money laundering, financing terrorism, and nontransparent financial transactions. It is noteworthy to mention that EAG is an Associate Member of the FATF (FATF, 2021). Considering the SCO states' membership in the EAG, it is evident that the FATF will severely limit Iran's SCO performance.

Iranian economists, businessmen, and people who previously worked for various trade organizations in Iran claim that the banking sanctions and the FATF hinder Iran in the context of SCO membership. Iranian economist Mohammad Mehdi Behkish states that Iran will not be able to return to normal conditions in international trade, even if it is a member of the SCO unless the sanctions are lifted (Donya-e-Eqtasad, 1400a). Khajehpour argues that the banking sanctions and the FATF restrictions may prevent Iran from taking full advantage of the SCO Interbank Consortium (Khajehpour, 2021).

Valiollah Afkhami, former head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) in the period of 2013-2017, believes that the economic gain that can be obtained from the SCO due to FATF would be fairly modest (Afkhami, 1400). Mohammad Reza Modudi, former head of the TPO in 2019-2020, also declared that SCO countries will not take the risk of trading with Iran as they avoid the confrontation with the US (ILNA, 2021).

In an interview conducted by the İRAM Economy Coordinatorship, the Independent Industrialists and Businessmen Association (MÜSİAD) Tehran representative Fatih

Figure 3: Challenges Faced by Iran



Source: Prepared by İRAM experts.

Çayabatmaz made the following remarks on Iran and SCO:

“Iran's export portfolio consists of crude oil, minerals and various agricultural products. In other words, Iran is actually a raw material exporter and it appeals more to developed countries. This will restrict Iran's trade with SCO countries to Russia, China, and India. As well, Iran is not a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and is therefore far from the practices and regulations that facilitate trade. Iran must be a member of the WTO to benefit from the SCO. In addition, there is a heavy embargo on the banking sector and Iran has not yet ratified the FATF. Iran can continue its exports through Sarrafs (money changers) only with low volume trade. Nonetheless, it is challenging to export large volumes of goods with containers and ships such as oil and petroleum products, thus the Western finance and insurance companies that control the trade and their inability to transfer those large sums to Iran due to sanctions audit also pose another problem. Unless Iran brings the money to the country, carrying trade is meaningless. Small-scale truck and ship activities and trade made by relocating flags

and destinations will not be effective. In the export context, this reduces Iran's competition. For this reason, Iran needs to return to global trade standards. If and only if it adopts the global standards, it can obtain the desired trade benefits".

Along with emphasizing Iran's SCO membership as a political development rather than economic Çayabatmaz also implies that: "It should not be ignored that Russia and China, as the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, possess a veto power. Moreover, political motives, rather than economic ones, dominate Iran's trade-related decisions. For instance, the Supreme Leader's decision to ban the import of household goods targets South Korea rather than protecting the domestic manufacturer. If Iran had an

economic purpose, it would have approved the FATF".

Moreover, although Iran's full membership in the SCO was confirmed at the summit in Dushanbe, Iran needs to negotiate at least 42 documents and treaties with the SCO in order to complete the full membership process. Among the documents and contracts that need to be negotiated, there are important processes related to FATF. In this regard, Rasool Mohajer, an adviser to the Iranian Foreign Minister and former deputy foreign minister, believes that Iran is still far from full membership in the SCO in the context of the formal process. Considering Iran's stance on the FATF, it is not unlikely that the full membership process will be disrupted. In addition, based on the experience of India and Pakistan, the full membership process is expected to take about two years (Donya-e-Eqtesad, 1400c).

Conclusion

It should be emphasized that despite all political and economic benefits, Iran's permanent membership in the SCO is of less importance and role than thought. The SCO members do not have a common currency or administrative body, unlike EU members. Afkhami claims that the SCO does not yield expected benefits as it is basically founded on politics and security (Afkhami, 1400). However, contrary to popular belief, SCO members do not sacrifice themselves for each other's security like NATO members. Although the SCO has managed to establish a strong balance against the US and NATO in the east, the SCO member-states have not yet succeeded in preventing the crisis in Afghanistan, ending the Pakistan-India conflict, or optimizing Sino-Russian economic relations. In addition, there are political and economic competitions among the members.

With this in mind, the establishment of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the EAEU by Russia was a response to China's attempt to dominate Central Asia and prevent it from being overshadowed by Moscow. As it is understood, competition within the Organization prevents the SCO from using its potential in economic and political issues. Thus, Iran should not expect the SCO to create a miracle in solving political, economic, and even security problems in the region.

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Notes:





“Tanıtım nüshasıdır, para ile satılamaz.”

“Bandrol Uygulamasına İlişkin Usul ve Esaslar Hakkında Yönetmeliğin
5’inci maddesinin 2’nci fıkrası çerçevesinde bandrol taşıması zorunlu değildir.”

About İRAM

Due to its historical depth and material power, Iran is among the countries that have to be reckoned with in the domain of international relations. The deep-rooted historical relations between Iran and Türkiye, border-sharing and comprehensive business relations make it necessary for Türkiye to understand Iran in a multitude of ways. Based on this necessity, the Center for Iranian Studies in Ankara (İran Araştırmaları Merkezi, İRAM) was established as an independent think tank in Ankara with the purpose of informing the Turkish public and interested parties about Iran. With this in mind, not only does İRAM produce field research, reports, and analyses based on primary resources, it also provides language courses, internships/scholarship programs, support for projects and graduate theses, workshops, and expert seminars in order to meet the need for experts and researchers on Iran in various disciplines in Türkiye. Offering a platform where academicians can share their research on Iran, İRAM also provides digital and printed publications on a wide variety of topics ranging from economy to domestic politics, international policy to security, and Shi'ism to society and culture.



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