



A meeting took place in Isfahan Chamber of Commerce with the presence of a delegation from Uzbekistan Handicraft Association.

### **Signing of a memorandum of cooperation between Isfahan and Uzbekistan in the field of tourism and handicrafts**

In the meeting of a delegation of artists and craftsmen from Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan with members of the Handicrafts, Tourism and Carpet Commission of the Isfahan Chamber of Commerce, the representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Isfahan, the head of the Research Center of the Isfahan City Council, Director General of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism of Isfahan province, some artists, heads of organizations and associations, which was held with the aim of developing communication in the field of organizing exhibition, export of handicrafts, developing tourism industry in between the two regions and training of craftsmen, a three-year cooperation agreement was signed.

Mozhgan Izadi, a member of the board of representatives and head of the Handicrafts, Tourism and Carpets Commission of the Isfahan Chamber of Commerce welcomed the presence of the artists and handicraft activists of Uzbekistan and the artists of Isfahan, and highlighted the position of the Isfahan Chamber With about 4 thousand members, including 60 economically active women, Isfahan Chamber is trying to expand the interactions of economic activists and especially artists pursuing the goals of the Handicrafts Commission.

Speaking about the historical background, civilization, culture and art of Isfahan, nicknamed half-of-the-world, she said: Isfahan's handicrafts are like a precious jewel and a symbol of admiration and creativity, and in various fields of enameling, inlaying, calligraphy embedded metals, handwoven carpets, calligraphy fabrics, etc., which has been passed down from generation to generation, has been able to achieve originality in many disciplines.

Izadi considered Isfahan handicrafts as a link between the past and present and the cultural ambassador of the countries and reminded: Art respects no border and today's meeting is an opportunity for the art-loving people of Isfahan to benefit from your presence as a messenger of peace and friendship between the two countries with the aim of exchanging ideas, and welcome the sharing of experiences with regard to the historical bond between the two nations.

#### **Setting up an exhibition of Isfahan art works in Uzbekistan**

Furthermore, Mohammad Reza Golahmadi, a member of the board of representatives and head of the International Council of the Isfahan Chamber, expressed his satisfaction with the relations between the two countries, considering the history, culture and common language, and said: In fact, we are all from the great country of Iran, though the borders separated us.

He added: The construction of a square similar to Naqshjahan Square in Uzbekistan indicates a common sense of culture and interest in communication, and we have gathered today to further strengthen this relation.

Referring to the diversity of Isfahan's handicraft arts, he said: Establishing an exhibition center to exhibit Isfahan's artworks in Uzbekistan will be an opportunity for the interaction of artists of the two countries, focusing on the transfer of experience, education and export of Isfahan's handicrafts.

#### **One third of the world's handicrafts variety is produced in Isfahan**

In this meeting, Amir Karamzadeh, Director General of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts of Isfahan province, said: This province with a population of 6 million has about 200 thousand artists who produce one-third of the variety of handicrafts in the world in 196 art disciplines. Acknowledging that the works of art and artists from Isfahan have gained the highest number of UNESCO's seal of authenticity, he stated: Our goal is to define joint cooperation both in the form of culture and art and the products, and that the works will remain as lasting souvenirs for the future to show the unique technique of Isfahani artists.

Karamzadeh considered holding this meeting as an opportunity to exhibit joint cooperation and added: On behalf of the government, we are interested in establishing an agreement in the field of handicrafts in accordance with the laws and regulations of our country. In addition, the import of handicrafts that already is produced in Iran is prohibited, unless it is a field that is not available among the sorts in Iran.

Of course, we are pioneer in exporting artifacts and we give our exporters incentives such as low-cost facilities and free participation in exhibitions abroad. We also help Uzbek businessmen in importing handicrafts from Iran.

Referring to the restrictions applied to the export of some items, including silverware, he stated: We are trying to remove this restriction, though up to several kgs of the products is possible to be exported.

He pointed out the existence of magnificent works in Isfahan and said: These works are good opportunities for exhibition interactions.

Karamzadeh informed about obtaining the license of the first center of convergence of handicrafts from the UNESCO and mentioned; In the

near future, we will open a center where all the handicrafts of the world will be exhibited.

#### **Allocation of a booth to display the artworks of Isfahan in Samarkand**

Expressing his gratitude for the hospitality of the people of Iran and solving the visa problems due to the dialogue between the governments, Rasul Jan Mirza Ahmadif, the head of the Handicrafts Association of Uzbekistan, said: with the aim to pursue two issues; the opportunity for dialogue with the relevant authorities and the craftsmen and to share experiences in the field of handicrafts and raw and primary materials, including natural dyes, as well as buying silver and necessary equipment used in handicrafts production.

He added: We are holding a very famous exhibition in Samarkand city in March and we are willing to allocate a booth for the display of Isfahan artworks, especially those active in the field of gold and jewelry.

Rasul Jan Ahmad if called Iran a great and important country and noted: This trip became an opportunity for us to have more eagerness for commercial, artistic and exhibition interactions with Isfahan.

In this meeting, Saeed Assachi, head of Isfahan Handwoven Carpet Producers and Exporters Association, announced the activity of 420,000 carpet weavers in Isfahan and said: Isfahan province is one of the top three provinces in the country in the production of handwoven carpets.

Pointing out that Isfahan province has thirteen styles of carpet production, he explained: After Qom, the largest amount of silk is used in Isfahan for weaving silk carpets, and last year we exported about seven million dollars of silk carpets from the province.

Acknowledging the progress that has been made in recent years in the field of silk production and consumption, he said: We can engage in bilateral trade and business interaction regarding the purchase of silk from Uzbekistan in exchange for carpets from us, what happens in trade with China.

In the end, a three-year cooperation agreement was signed in the field of handicrafts, holding festivals, conferences and art exhibitions between the parties, providing services and free hotel accommodation for artists.