

## SHIRAZ

### A) A Brief Introduction of Shiraz

Being the capital of Fars Province, Shiraz is located in southwest Iran. Fars Province has played such a major role in the country's ancient history that it is considered the center of Iranian identity - the Persian language spoken today is called Farsi. Indeed, Fars was one of the main seats of the great Achaemenian Empire, stretching from Egypt to India. The province is home to numerous precious monuments including the UNESCO-inscribed sites such as the Persepolis, the Pasargadae, eight archaeological sites situated in three geographical areas in the southeast of Fars Province under the title "Sassanid Archeological Landscape of Fars Province," and Eram Garden and ancient Garden of Pasargadae (an example of the Persian Garden).

Covering an area of 240 square kilometers, Shiraz has a population of around 1.8 million, making it the fifth most populous city in Iran and first in the southern half of the country. The earliest reference to the city is on Elamite clay tablets which date back to 2000 B.C. Recent excavations attribute early settlements in the plain of Shiraz to 6000 B.C. Founded in the Achaemenian Dynasty (2500 years ago), Shiraz became one of the main cities of the province. It was chosen as Iran's capital several times, the last one being during Zand Dynasty (1749-1779), the time when many architectural masterpieces (Karim Khan Citadel, Vakil Bazar, Vakil Mosque, etc.) were built. The literary center of Iran – thanks to the world-known poets like Hafez and Sa'adi – boasts a long tradition of art, with its specific painting style known as Shiraz School flourishing in the 14th century. A wide variety of handicrafts are produced in the city: Khatam and Monabbat, kinds of wood marquetry, Ghalamzani, and seven-colored tiles, to mention just a few.

Shiraz has a semi-arid climate with hot summers and cold winters and is famous for its beautiful moderate springs and falls. The city is abounded with gardens, some of which are known all over the world. In spring the gardens are filled with the sour orange blossom aroma. Yet, the winter enters the city with the scent of Narcissus of Shiraz.

Having been noted as a regional trade center for more than a thousand years, the city enjoys industries such as cement production, sugar, fertilizers, textile products, wood products, metalwork and rugs. It also has a major oil refinery and is a major center for Iran's electronic industries.

Shiraz is also noted for its quality higher education, with Shiraz University and Shiraz University of Medical Sciences ranking among the best in the region. It is a major health hub in the region, with a prestigious reputation for organ transplant (Kidney and liver in particular) beyond the Asian countries. In 2017, more than 620 liver transplant operations were carried out in Shiraz Namazi hospital outnumbering any other medical center in the world.

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Shiraz is one of the most favorite tourist destinations for domestic travelers and its rich diversity of tourist attractions is perhaps one of the most important drives for the country's growing tourism industry. Shiraz houses the Shahcheragh Shrine of Ahmad ibn Mousa (A) making it the third most important religious city. It also enjoys a variety of natural and cultural attractions including the Jahan Nama garden, Afifabad garden, and Karim Khan Citadel and Maharloo Lake, to just mention a few. It is home to the tombs of the world known poets Sadi (whose work *Bustan/ the Orchard* is one of the 100 greatest books of all time according to the Guardian) and also Hafez, whose work influenced such renowned literary figures as Goethe inspiring him to compose his *West-östlicher Divan*.

Shiraz has sister-city relationships with Chongqing (China), Dushanbe (Tajikistan), Nicosia (Cyprus), Weimar (Germany) Pecs (Hungary) and Nanjing (China) and has a network of friend cities including Yerevan, Baghdad, Lviv, Dresden, Gaziantep, and Grozny. It is a member of the World Association of Major Metropolises (Metropolis), United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), Mayors for Peace, Organization of Islamic Capitals and Cities (OICC), UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC), the World e-Government Organizations (WeGo), the League of Historical Cities (LHC) as member of the board of directors, Asian Mayors Forum (AMF) as member of the executive board, and Inter-city Cooperation Network for Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICCN) as member of the executive board.

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## B) The Structure of the Local Government

The Shiraz Islamic City Council is a local council elected by direct public vote to a 4-year term. The current council consists of 13 members who took office in August 2017. The City Council is mainly responsible for legislative functions. Their most important duty is appointing a mayor who heads and runs the municipality (the executive body). The councilors assemble weekly and are responsible for establishing main policies, approving the budget proposed by the mayor, supervising the activities of the municipality, etc. To increase the efficiency of its work, the Shiraz City Council has formed several specialized committees to identify social, cultural, educational, health, economic, and welfare requirements of their constituencies, make appropriate decisions relevant to these areas, supervise the work of the pertinent departments and organizations of the municipality, discuss and approve the relevant bills before the final approval of the City Council. Each councilor could join more than one committee. The committee sessions are also attended by the relevant municipal managers, committee advisors, representatives of governmental bodies and the private sector related to the weekly agenda, and the committees' advisors. The committees include: 1) pilgrimage and tourism, 2) culture, social and sports, 3)

development, traffic and transport, 4) urban planning and architecture, 5) planning, budget and legal affairs, 6) health, environment and urban services, 7) economy and investment.

The municipality has 7 main departments headed by deputy mayors all appointed by the mayor: finance and economy, Social, Cultural and Sports, planning and human resources development, traffic and transportation, urban services, urban planning and architecture, development and civil engineering. The mayor also appoints 11 district mayors.

### C) Some Suggested areas for City-2-City Cooperation

Shiraz Municipality and the Shiraz Islamic City Council a wide variety of activities which can help our people get to know each other's culture, developing an understand of each other's traditions, customs and way of life. These activities could range from small to more large scale projects, from a single music performance, or a photo exhibition introducing the city, its attractions, etc., to an exhibition of artwork (displaying the work of a single/group of artists) to a whole culture week or a gathering of officials and the private sector representatives from both sides on exchange of tourism. As Shiraz seeks to join the UNESCO Creative Cities Network in the filed of literature, projects which can be defined within this framework are also welcomed. Since how these ideas can turn into concrete projects to the best interest of both sides depend on a good understanding of the other side potentialities, it would be a good idea if the City of Moscow could send a delegation to Shiraz to have face-to-face meetings as well as technical visits enabling them to acquire a first-hand experience of the city and areas of work appropriate for cooperation.