

Iran Restarts Car Exports to Russia

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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TEHRAN — Iran began exporting automobiles to Russia for the first time in five years on Sunday, after meeting upgraded emission standards, the country's largest auto manufacturer said.

Workers at Iran-Khodro's factory in Tehran loaded the first shipment, which includes Samand and Runna sedans. The company plans to export 10,000 cars to Russia by 2015.

Iran-Khodro exported more than 12,000 cars to Russia from 2007 to 2009, but the shipments stopped when Russia adopted stricter Euro-4 emission standards.

The resumption comes at a time of greater openness to trade with Iran following an interim nuclear deal reached in November that saw some international sanctions eased in return for Tehran freezing or curbing parts of its nuclear program. Iran hopes to reach a final nuclear deal with Russia and other world powers by next month.

The exports also reflect increasing cooperation between the two countries. Russia built a

nuclear power plant for Iran that went online in 2011, and Tehran and Moscow are in discussions to build more.

Iran's manufacturing sector has been crippled by international sanctions imposed over its nuclear program. Western nations have long suspected Iran of covertly seeking a nuclear weapons capability alongside its civilian program.

Tehran denies the allegations and insists its nuclear activities are only aimed at power generation and medical treatments.

Before the sanctions, Iran produced more than 1 million cars per year.

Russia is a big market, with a total of 2.78 million new passenger cars and light and commercial vehicles sold in 2013.

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