

Dear Celeste Biever,  
Chief News Editor,  
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### **Welcome to the brave new world of post JCPOA agreement.**

There are many obstacles to scientific development in the developing world, but none is as ethereal as international contact. There are many in the science community in the developing world who actually do not even consider it necessary, but those who understand the workings of modern science know that without it you cannot do good science.

Over the past 25 years, whilst the Iranian society was witnessing an accelerated rate of growth in science, international connection was truly difficult. The reasons being, that the trip to Iran was attractive only because Iran an exotic destination, so it is worth doing once. Then only once one would make such a trip since there is little scientific outcome. The main reasons for going to a scientific meeting, i.e. airing your views and hearing your peers' views is missing.

The other reason that made scientific meetings in Iran difficult was sanctions. For people such as myself who have gone through the pains of inviting foreign speakers to Iranian scientific activities, these were clear and formidable obstacles to overcome. Our hopes were raised by the signing of *Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)*, which lifted the UN sanctions on Iran, we enthusiastically thought that part of the problems will at last be solved.

Alas relief was not to come, the recent US act (*Terrorist Travel Prevention Act of 2015*) on the Visa Waiver Program (VWP), changes the picture completely. Now, the scientists from most European countries do need to apply for a US visa if they have visited Iran in the last five years. Clearly a European scientist who normally visits US for annual scientific meetings such as the APS March meeting, will not be willing to come to Iran to a scientific meeting and face long visa queues, as a cost. The avalanche of cancellations was received in many Iranian meetings scheduled to take place over the next few months. So the situation is indeed now worse than Pre-JCPOA.

Recently the US department of homeland security, announced how it is going to implement the act. Certain categories such as diplomatic, military and business travel are exempted. Leaves you wondering how the intention of "business" travel can be verified, and why scientific purpose, which is much easier to verify is not exempted.

Last but not least, I always thought that only in the Middle East *Ex post facto* laws are passed. Now I see that we are not alone. Four years ago, a European colleague

visited Iran on my invitation, he and I never thought that he would face so much future trouble travelling to US.

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President

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