

## Russia: Iran to remain SCO observer

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Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has said that Iran will remain an observer member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. "Iran would not be able to get the status of an associate member of the SCO because the organization has no associate members but observer nations," Lavrov told reporters on Friday. He made the statement after a meeting of the SCO foreign ministers in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

Founded in 2001, the SCO brings together China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan as members, while Mongolia, Pakistan, Iran and India have observer status.

Lavrov added that the foreign ministers did not discuss expansion of the SCO, saying, "We agreed to take practical measures which would enable all observers to take part in the activities of the organization that affect their interests."

The Russian foreign minister expressed hope that the SCO leaders would approve the proposal.



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