

The 8th Council of Ministers

Report

(Almaty, 9 May , 1998)

ADOPTED
No.CON/COM/8/RPT.
Dt. 9-5-1998.

1. The Eighth Annual Meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) was held in Almaty on 9 May, 1998. The Council of Ministers Meeting was preceded by the Senior Officials Meeting held on 5-7 May, 1998 under the Chairmanship of H.E. Mr. Erlan A. Idrissov, First Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The Representatives of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan Republic, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Turkey, Turkmenistan and Republic of Uzbekistan attended the Meeting. The Secretary General of ECO and other officials of the Secretariat also attended the Meeting. The list of participants is placed at ANNEX-I.

Agenda Item No. 1

INAUGURATION OF THE MEETING

2. H.E. Dr. Kamal Kharrazi, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in his capacity as the Chairman of the ECO Council of Ministers opened the Meeting.

Agenda Item No. 2

ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN

3. - In accordance with the Rules of Procedures and as per tradition, H.E. Mr. Kassymjomart Tokaev, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan was elected unanimously to assume the Chairmanship of the Council. He delivered his inaugural statement.

Agenda Item No. 3

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

4. The Council revised and adopted the Agenda for its meeting which is placed at ANNEX-II. It was noted that the latest draft Agenda was given the final shape during late April, 1998.

Agenda Item No. 4

APPOINTMENT OF THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE

5. The Council decided that the Senior Officials of the ECO Member States may act as the drafting Committee to prepare the Report of the Meeting.

Agenda Item No. 5

STATEMENTS BY THE HEADS OF DELEGATIONS

6. The Foreign Ministers/Heads of the delegations delivered their statements expressing the views of their respective Governments regarding the evolution of the regional cooperation activities of ECO and put forward views/suggestions on the ongoing and planned activities. The copies of the statements provided to the Secretariat are placed at ANNEX-III.

Agenda Item No. 6

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL ON ECO ACTIVITIES DURING THE YEAR 1997-98 INCLUDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RESTRUCTURING PROCESS

The Secretary General presented his Annual Report to the Council of Ministers on ECO activities for the year 1997-98. The text of that report was circulated by the Secretariat on 30th April, 1998. The Council took due note of the observations and suggestions put forth by the Secretary General pertaining to the functioning of the Secretariat and decided as follows:

☐ Matters related to the interim arrangements and recruitment policy approved by the COM in its 7th Meeting shall be considered and decided upon by the Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR).

☐ Based on the recommendation of the CPR, the council amended Article-29(c) of the ECO Rules of Procedure as follows:

"For all other meetings, the quorum shall be simple majority of the total membership. **However, for events not requiring to take any decision, the quorum shall be four Member States only**".

☐ The Council stressed the need for provision of modern communication/technical equipment for the ECO Secretariat and asked the CPR to evaluate and decide upon the requirements of the Secretariat in this respect.

8. The Council noted with satisfaction that the implementation Plan of the Restructuring and Reorganization of the ECO Secretariat has almost been completed including the establishment of the new Directorates i.e Economic Research and Statistics and Project Research. A copy of the full text of Secretary General's Report is placed at ANNEX-IV.

Agenda Item No. 7

ADOPTION OF THE REPORTS OF THE COUNCIL OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES (CPR)

9. The Council approved the Reports of the Meetings of the Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) held since the last session of the Council of Ministers in April 1997 in Tehran. The approval encompasses the reports from 7th to 21st CPR Meetings.

Agenda Item No. 8

ECO SECRETARIAT BUDGET FOR 1998.

10. The Council was informed that the Secretariat's budget for the year 1998 had been approved on its behalf by the CPR in accordance with the Article 3.2 of the Financial Regulations. The Council also appealed to the concerned Member States to expeditiously pay their respective contributions for the ECO Secretariat's budget for 1998.

Agenda Item No. 9

APPROVAL OF AUDIT REPORT FOR 1996

11. The Council approved the Audit Report of the Secretariat Accounts pertaining to the ten months period i.e. March-December, 1996. The Council also approved the renewal of the tenure of the present Audit Board for another three years as recommended by CPR.

Agenda Item No. 10

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL AND APPROVAL OF THE ECO ANNUAL CALENDAR OF EVENTS AND WORK PROGRAMME FOR 1998-99

12. The Council considered the Report of the Eighth Meeting of the Regional Planning Council (RPC) held in Tehran on 19-21 April, 1998, which is placed at ANNEX-V. While adopting the Report, the Council made the following observations:

- i) Member Countries were urged to take keen interest in implementation of the approved ECO Calendar of Events/Meetings and asked the Member States to fully participate in those events. Moreover, the Council requested the Member States to volunteer to host such events for which no host has as yet been identified. However, in the absence of a host, Secretariat should hold the meeting on non-hospitality basis as scheduled.
- ii) The Annexes of the Transit Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA) should also be agreed upon by the High Level Experts Group (HLEG) at the earliest.
- iii) Necessary steps for establishment of the Permanent Commission on Transport & Communications as envisaged in the Ashgabat Declaration and recommended by the 2nd Meeting of the ECO Transport Ministers held in Ashgabat in March, 1998, should be taken.

- iv) The gradual elimination of tariffs and non-tariffs barriers should be given due attention to facilitate trade among the Member States.
- v) Remaining formalities to establish some of the ECO Institutions including ECO Trade and Development Bank and ECO Reinsurance Company should be expedited by the signatory Member States.

13. Uzbekistan's abstention in connection with the activity titled "Workshop on Air and Water Pollution Control" proposed to be organized in Girne was noted.

Agenda Item No.11

SUBMISSION OF ANNUAL REPORTS OF ECO'S SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS (ARTICLE -10 OF THE TREATY OF IZMIR)

14. The Council took note of the Annual Reports of ECO Specialized Agencies and Regional Institutions namely:

-  - ECO Shipping Company.
-  - ECO Cultural Institute.
-  - ECO College of Insurance.

The Council expressed its wish that, in its next meeting, the remaining ECO agencies and institutions will be able to submit their respective annual reports.

Agenda Item No. 12

REVIEW OF PROGRESS ON AGREEMENTS SIGNED DURING THE THIRD ECO SUMMIT MEETING AT ISLAMABAD IN 1995

15. The Council reviewed the Status Report and Monitoring Chart of the Implementation Status of ECO Agreements signed during the Third ECO Summit Meeting. While welcoming the entry into force of the Agreements on Transit Trade and Simplification of Visa Procedures for the Businessmen of ECO Member States during December, 1997 and March, 1998 respectively, the Council urged the Member States for early implementation of the remaining Agreements and called upon the non-signatory Member States to reconsider their accession to these Agreements.

16. With a view to strengthening the cooperative relationship among the Member States, the Council called upon the concerned Member States to fulfill their obligations to establish the ECO affiliated institutions such as ECO Trade and Development Bank, ECO Reinsurance Company, ECO Cultural Institute, ECO Science Foundation and ECO Air. The Council emphasized the need for the ECO Shipping Company's shareholders to fulfil their obligations so that this ECO Institution may not face undesirable difficulties.

Agenda Item No. 13

REVIEW OF PROGRESS ON ASHGABAT DECLARATION AND THE OUTCOME OF SECOND CONFERENCE OF ECO MINISTERS OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

17. The Council took note of the various steps taken by the Member States and the Secretariat to implement the provisions contained in the Ashgabat Declaration (1997).

18. The Council adopted the report of the 2nd Ministerial Meeting on Transport and Communications held in Ashgabat in March 1993 (ANNEX-VI), and took particular note of the decisions taken during the said meeting such as approval of the Programme of Action for the ECO Decade of Transport and Communications (1998-2007), appointment of High Level Experts Groups to finalize the Transit Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA) and review the progress made in implementation of the Almaty Outline Plan and Ashgabat Declaration (1997). The decision of the Ministers to meet once every two years and Pakistan's offer to host the next Ministerial Meeting in the year 2000 was also noted.

19. The Council also took note of the progress achieved in the fields of the oil and Gas Pipeline Routes and Interconnection of Power Grids.

Agenda Item No. 14

APPROVAL OF:

- a) BASIC DOCUMENTS OF ECO CULTURAL INSTITUTE, ECO SCIENCE FOUNDATION AND ECO EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE.
- b) CHARTER OF ECO EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE
- c) MOU ON COOPERATION AGAINST SMUGGLING AND CUSTOMS FRAUDS.
- d) RESOLUTION WITH REGARD TO STRENGTHENING THE MEASURES FOR
- e) MONITORING THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN PRECURSORS WHICH ARE USED IN THE ILLICIT MANUFACTURE OF NARCOTIC DRUGS AND PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCES.
- f) MODALITIES FOR GRANT OF ECO AWARDS
- g) TRANSIT TRANSPORT FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT.

a) BASIC DOCUMENTS OF ECO CULTURAL INSTITUTE, ECO SCIENCE FOUNDATION AND ECO EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE

20. The Council approved the basic documents of the ECO Cultural Institute and ECO Educational Institute. The approved documents are placed at ANNEX-VII.

21. The Council also approved the basic documents of ECO Science Foundation, in principle, on the understanding that these will be prepared on the pattern of the approved basic documents of the ECO Cultural Institute and the ECO Educational Institute.

b) CHARTER OF ECO EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE.

22. The Council approved the Charter of ECO Educational Institute and decided to open it for signing. It's copy is placed at ANNEX-VIII.

c) MOU ON COOPERATION AGAINST SMUGGLING AND CUSTOMS FRAUDS AMONG ECO MEMBER STATES.

23. The Council approved the subject document with some minor editorial changes and decided to open it for signing. It's copy is placed at ANNEX-IX.

d) RESOLUTION WITH REGARD TO STRENGTHENING THE MEASURES FOR MONITORING THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN PRECURSORS WHICH ARE USED IN THE ILLICIT MANUFACTURE OF NARCOTIC DRUGS AND PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCES.

24. The Council reviewed and approved the Resolution with regard to Strengthening the Measures for Monitoring the International Trade in Precursors which are used in the Illicit Manufacture of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. It's copy is placed at ANNEX-X.

e) DOCUMENT ON MODALITIES FOR GRANT OF ECO AWARDS.

25. The Council approved the document on modalities for grant of ECO Awards as recommended by the CPR. It's copy is placed at ANNEX-XI.

f) THE TRANSIT TRANSPORT FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT (TTFA).

26. The Council, appreciating the valuable work done by the High Level Experts Group (HLEG) entrusted with finalizing the Transit Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA), approved the main text of the said Agreement. The Council decided to open the main text of the Agreement for signing by the Member States. A copy of the TTFA is placed at ANNEX-XII.

27. The Council also endorsed the recommendation of 8th Meeting of the RPC requesting the HLEG to continue its work on elaboration of the texts of the Annexures of TTFA so that this work is completed by October, 1998.

Agenda Item -No. 15

PREPARATIONS FOR THE FIFTH ECO SUMMIT INCLUDING FINALIZATION OF ITS DRAFT AGENDA

28. The Council noted with satisfaction that all the Member Governments have already confirmed their participation in the forthcoming 5th ECO Summit Meeting scheduled to be held in Almaty on 11 May, 1998. The Council reviewed and approved the draft agenda for the 5th Summit Meeting prepared by the Secretariat. The draft agenda is placed at ANNEX-XIII.

29. The Council recommended that the Programme of the Summit Meeting be as follows:-

Sunday, 10th May, 1998:

1400-1800 hrs - Arrival of the Heads of State/Government, Hotel Accommodation.

1930 hrs - Departure for the Concert of Artists of Kazakhstan.

2000-2100 hrs - Concert.

Monday 11th May, 1998:

- 0900-0955 hrs - Meeting of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan with the Heads of State/Government.
- 1000-1200 hrs - Inauguration of the Meeting.
- Adoption of the Agenda.
 - Statements by the Heads of State/Government.
 - Statements of the Representatives of International Organizations.
- 1200-1210 hrs - Break (Press and guests will leave).
- 1210-1330 hrs - Report of the Chairman of the ECO Council of Ministers.
- Report of the Secretary General of ECO.
 - Adoption of the Almaty Declaration.
 - Date and Venue of the next Meeting.
 - Vote of Thanks and Closing Remarks.
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- 1330-1340 hrs - Short Session for photographs.
- 1345-1415 hrs - Joint Press Conference by H.E.Mr.Nursultan Nazerbayev, the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan and H.E.Mr.Onder Ozar, Secretary General ECO.
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- 1500-1630 hrs - Lunch hosted by H.E.Mr.Nursultan Nazerbayev, President of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Agenda Item No. 16

CONSIDERATION OF ALMATY DECLARATION

30. The Council reviewed and finalized the draft Almaty Declaration for the Summit Meeting. The draft Almaty Declaration as recommended by the COM is placed at ANNEX-XIV.

Agenda Item No. 17

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

31. No issue was raised under this item of Agenda.

Agenda Item No. 18

DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

32. The Council agreed that the Chairman will continue his consultations with the Member States to determine the date and venue of the 9th Meeting of the Council of Ministers.

Agenda Item No. 19

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

33. The Council unanimously adopted the report of its meeting.

Agenda Item No. 20

VOTE OF THANKS AND CLOSING OF THE MEETING.

34. The Council expressed its profound thanks to the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan for the excellent arrangements to host this meeting and for the warm hospitality extended to the delegations. The Council also expressed its appreciation to the Chairman for the efficient manner in which he steered the meeting to a successful conclusion. The Council also expressed its appreciation and thanks to the Secretary General and his staff for their valuable services to facilitate the work of the meeting.