

13th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport

Tehran Declaration

2 June 2025

Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

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We the Ministers/Heads of delegations of the ECO Member States, gathering on June 2, 2025 in Tehran to join this Ministerial meeting on Transport and while:

Highlighting our resolve to materialize the goal of “*Advancing Regional Transport Connectivity and Sustainable Development*” through enhanced cooperation in the ECO Region;

Reiterating its call to the remaining Member States to sign and ratify the Transit Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA) and its protocol and annexures,

Being guided by the relevant decisions related to the field of transport and connectivity adopted within the Mashhad Communiqué of the ECO Council of Ministers (COM) held in Mashhad, the Islamic Republic of Iran on December 3, 2024 and emphasizing the importance of its follow up actions;

Realizing the important role of transport sector including multimodal and intermodal transportation, to support the sustainable socio-economic progress, secure supply chains and development in the ECO region;

Recognizing the imperative to expedite the implementation of the ECO strategic long-term priority for the development of transport and connectivity infrastructure, with the dual objective of enhancing regional and inter-regional integration within the ECO framework and to contribute to the global connectivity;

Underscoring the urgency of removal of procedural bottlenecks of transportation including permits, visa and quotas, where applicable, to speed up transport cooperation;

Welcoming expansion of the ECO corridors to the international networks and neighboring regions;

Underlining the strategic importance of the regional multimodal corridors, including Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul (ITI) and welcoming potential extension of ITI, KTI, TUTIT, KUTIT, KTAI, KTAP, Pakistan-Central Asia, Almaty-Tehran-Istanbul, Bandar Abbas-Almaty, Trans-Caspian East-West and North-South Corridors, Black Sea-Persian Gulf rail and road corridors to Europe;

Recognizing the importance of digitalizing transport, customs and border crossing documents and procedures with a view to creating digital transport corridors among the interested Member States;

Highlighting the role of private sector and the freight forwarders and transport operators in development and strengthening connectivity in the Region and commending the establishment of ECO-TIR Associations Consultative Group (ECO-TIRACG) and potential establishment of ECO Freight Forwarders Association;

Realizing the important role of regional maritime and civil aviation cooperation in maintaining the supply chain and people-to-people connectivity for the Member States;

Welcoming the establishment of Air Hubs in the ECO Region that will improve intra-ECO connections and promote cooperation in civil aviation for enhancing regional connectivity and economic integration;

Commending the supportive role of the Islamic Development Bank for financial contributions to the ECO transport projects, in particular the completion of the first phase (pre-feasibility study) of the ‘ECO Transport Corridors and ECO Gates’ project;

Recognizing the necessity for engagement of the ECO-Trade and Development Bank in financing, co-financing and attraction of possible investor to the transport projects of the ECO;

Highlighting the important role of the ECO\UNECE Coordination Council on Trans-Caspian and Almaty-Tehran-Istanbul Corridors in development of regional and international connectivity;

Underpinning the significant role of the international partnership with the relevant international organizations, IFIs and development agencies in development, facilitation and financing the ECO regional connectivity projects;

Have decided to:

1. **Invite** the Member States that have not yet acceded to/ratified the Transit Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA) to do so, and stressed the necessity of its full implementation by all the Member States for the economic development of the ECO Region;
2. **Consider** the possibility of establishment of ECO special fund for development of transport through voluntarily contribution of the interested Member States and request the Secretariat to prepare necessary modalities for such fund.
3. **Appreciate** the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting the 15th Meeting of Heads of the Railway of the ECO Member States/9th Meeting of the Railway Committee of the TTCC in Tehran in May 2024 and urge the Member States to implement the recommendations and decisions of the above meetings.
4. Request the ECO Secretariat and the ECO-TDB to organize a conference on financing for ECO transport projects in collaboration/jointly with the multilateral development banks, International Financial Institutions and development partners, the Member States are also encouraged to contribute to the organization of the such conference.
5. **Express** support for abolition of traffic permit regime for road transport in order to help revitalize the economies of the region and enhance smooth transportation;
6. **Call** upon interested Member States to consider possibility of acceding to the ECO Visa Scheme to facilitate multiple entry visa issuance for drivers/train crew while minimizing the risks;
7. **Encourage** the Member States to optimize border crossing capacity through application of joint or coordinated border control, establishing

‘Special Lanes for Perishable Goods, and transferring custom formalities relating to import, export and from borders to inland customs offices and terminals closest to the border;

8. **Call upon** the Member States to enhance their efforts for adoption of technological and smart solutions to ensure the smooth flow of goods in transit and **mandate** the ECO Secretariat to pro-actively conceive and implement related projects and capacity building initiatives on transport technologies, smart transport and digitalization in collaboration with international partners;
9. **Support** the initiatives of the Republic of Kazakhstan aimed at conducting research on the development of the international North-South Transport Corridor with an emphasis of routing, digitalization, information exchange and formation of an economic corridor.
10. **Request** the Member States to continuously update their national data on the Geographic Information System (ITIO-GIS) platform;
11. **Emphasize** on commercialization and further extension of all regional corridors to the neighboring regions, namely Europe and China and in particular ITI, KTI, TUTIT, KUTIT, KTAI, KTAP, Almaty-Tehran–Istanbul, Bandar Abbas-Almaty, Trans-Caspian East-West, North-South Corridors, Black Sea-Persian Gulf rail and road corridors and acknowledge their capacity to serve as key transit corridors in the region;
12. **Stress** on the importance of determination of the need of connectivity of necessary links and the construction of missing links between Rasht-Astara (Iran) and rehabilitation of Quetta – Taftan segment of ITI corridor, establishment of TIR Parks at Border Crossing Points (BCPs), expansion of transit capacity of Gurbulakh\Bazargan BCP, construction of Cheshmeh Soraya-Aralik and other regional missing rail and road links and **mandate** the Member States to conduct bilateral technical meetings and share the outcome of the meetings with the Secretariat;
13. **Encourage** the participation of private sector investment in implementation of infrastructure projects on Public Private Partnership (PPP) basis in collaboration with International Financial Institutions (IFI).

14. **Underscore** the importance of implementation of the Awaza Programme of Action and providing the ECO Land Locked Countries with uninterrupted access to transport infrastructure, within the framework of national legislation and international agreements to which ECO Member States are party to, especially to seaports;
15. **Welcome** the decision of Turkmenistan to host the 3rd UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries on 5-8 August 2025 in Awaza and **call** the Member States to actively participate in the side event, to be organized by the ECO Secretariat in the margins of the Conference;
16. **Promote** the connectivity of ITI Railway to international corridors and emphasize the importance of upgrading and harmonization of infrastructure to strengthen connectivity between these regions together with the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars corridor as well as Cheshmesuray (Iran)-Aralik (Türkiye) railway.
17. **Support** promotion of maritime cooperation particularly in establishing Ro-Ro Lines in the Caspian Sea, organize and support technical training programs, workshops and capacity building initiatives related to maritime safety, port management and navigation to strengthen the expertise of ECO Member States in maritime affairs;
18. **Encourage** greater involvement and coordination of the ECO Maritime Network in the activities of the Organization, including joint projects, information sharing, and maritime policy dialogue. Promote the transformation of the ECO Maritime Network into a smart maritime network model by encouraging digital integration, real-time data sharing, and the adoption of innovative maritime technologies;
19. **Express interest** to increase collaboration for developing regional tourism by enhancing land, rail, sea and air connectivity to tourism destinations in the region and in this context encourage the Member States to consider accession to the relevant UN Conventions, including Customs Convention on the Temporary Importation of Commercial

Road Vehicles, Customs Convention on the Temporary Importation of Private Road Vehicles, and Convention on Temporary Admission;

20. **Encourage** the Member States to establish regular and chartered flights to facilitate air connectivity, organize training courses, establish joint repair and maintenance centers, establish joint airlines and cooperation through code sharing;
21. **Emphasis** the importance of the Samarkand and Gabala Airports as ECO Regional Air Hubs for improving air-connectivity in the region and to encourage the Member States to consider active use of the above airports;
22. **Welcome** the proposal of the Islamic Republic of Iran to offer investment opportunities and provision of facilities in ports as well as border areas namely; Chahbahar, Bandar Abbas, Sarakhs, Incheh-Boroun, Aras, and Maku and Aprin for establishment of logistic centers;
23. **Welcome** the proposal of the Islamic Republic of Iran to establish Cold-Chain Corridor to facilitate transit of perishable stuff to the neighboring countries; Europe and Russia.
24. **Support** establishment of network of universities and research centers on transport among the Member States and request the Secretariat to provide a list of the aforementioned entities and formulate a workable mechanism for cooperation among the members of the network.
25. **Acknowledge** the contribution and supportive role of the private sector in promotion of transit and trade in our region and stress on early operationalization of the “ECO Forwarders Association” and **request** the Secretariat to organize technical meetings to finalize the Statute in 2025;
26. **Encourage** organization of the “ECO Transport Excellence Award” on the sidelines of the next Ministerial Meetings and request the active engagement of the private sector in the selection process of the candidates;

27. **Acknowledge** the ongoing preparatory work for the new ECO Vision 2026 2035 and emphasize the need for transport-related objectives that align with emerging trends in digitalization, trade facilitation, and resilient supply chains and in this connection mandate the Secretariat to prepare ECO sustainable and resilient transport strategy for 2026-2035 through international cooperation and recruitment of international and national consultants;
28. **Assign** the ECO Secretariat to speed up the implementation of the initiative of the Republic of Uzbekistan to establish the ECO Digital Transport and Customs Office in the city of Tashkent.
29. **Mandate** the ECO Secretariat to closely collaborate with the Islamic Republic of Iran as the current chair of TRACECA to revitalize the existing MoU and strengthen cooperation on common areas of interest through implementing joint activities and projects.
30. **Acknowledge** the pro-active approach of the Secretariat in implementing decisions of the Ministerial Meeting and in particular in establishing and enhancing relations with various international organization including UNOHRLLS, OTIF, UNECE, UNESCAP, IRU and other relevant agencies.
31. **Encourage** organization of joint projects, programs, training courses and workshops between ECO Secretariat and IsDB, UNESCAP, UNECE, IRU, IMO, OTIF, OSJD, ICAO, UNOHRLLS, UNCTAD, TRACECA and other international organizations and, in this framework, **call** upon the Secretariat to further strengthen its relations with the interested international organizations;
32. **Express** sincere gratitude and appreciation to the substantive contributions and inputs from ECO Member States and International Organizations to secure practical outcome of the Ministerial Meeting on Transport and the preceding Senior Officials' Meeting.
33. **Recognize** the constructive role of the ECO Secretary General and his team in materializing the objectives and mandates of the Organization,

particularly in the transport sector, and fully support any such programs, projects and future initiatives for enhancing regional connectivity and economic growth of the Region;

34. **Acknowledge** the Republic of Türkiye for organization of "Global Transport Connectivity Forum 2025", which will take place from 27 to 29 June, 2025 in Istanbul, and support the Forum's important role in the work on connectivity to connect regions, continents and people,
35. **Thank** the Islamic Republic of Iran for excellent hosting of this important meeting and welcome the offer of the Republic of Kazakhstan to host the 14th Ministerial Meeting on Transport in 2026.
