

Distinguished Mr. Ömer Bolat,

Distinguished Mr. Asad Majeed Khan,

Distinguished Heads of Delegations,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Distinguished Mr. Ömer Bolat, distinguished Mr. Asad Majeed Khan, I would like to convey to you the greetings of our esteemed Minister of Economy and Commerce of the Kyrgyz Republic, Mr. Bakyt Sydykov, who could not attend this event due to the State Visit of the President of the Russian Federation to the Kyrgyz Republic and the Session of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) Heads of State.

The Kyrgyz Republic attaches particular importance to strengthening partnerships within the framework of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), aimed at deepening trade, economic, investment, and transport connectivity.

In this context, the activities of the ECO Regional Planning Council, which covers a broad spectrum of areas, play a significant role.

I would like to draw your attention to the relatively low level of mutual trade.

Thus, the trade turnover of the Kyrgyz Republic with ECO member states amounted to USD 3.13 billion and increased by 16.3% compared to 2023, including exports – USD 1.31 billion (an increase of 23%) and imports – around USD 2 billion (a growth of 13%).

In this regard, I would like to emphasize that a priority task at this stage is the adoption of joint measures to significantly increase trade turnover among our countries.

At the same time, it should be noted that ECO cooperation maintains a practical economic focus. Owing to this, the ECO platform serves as an effective instrument for

promoting and expanding the potential of trade and economic interaction among its member states.

It is important to underline that trade and economic cooperation remains a key priority within the ECO. Today, in the context of global transformations, it is essential to give this cooperation new substance and ensure its sustainable development at a qualitatively new level.

First, the increase in mutual trade volumes should be accompanied by structural improvement. It is necessary to create conditions for expanding the range of traded goods, stimulate direct links between exporters and importers, and support joint trade initiatives, including those involving small and medium-sized enterprises.

Second, trade facilitation remains one of the priority areas of cooperation. We support efforts aimed at digitalizing customs operations, implementing electronic certificates of origin, and harmonizing technical regulations and standards. The implementation of these measures will significantly reduce the time and costs associated with border crossings, enhancing predictability and convenience for businesses.

In this regard, the Kyrgyz Republic, as a landlocked country, is particularly interested in effective logistical integration into regional and global supply chains. We believe it would be appropriate to explore the possibility of granting preferential conditions for the use of dry and seaports within the ECO framework.

This would be an important step toward simplifying and reducing logistics costs for all member states, especially those with limited access to maritime transport routes.

In the area of trade facilitation, I would also like to inform you about the new information system of the Customs Service of the Kyrgyz Republic, "Smart Customs."

Currently, in order to enhance the efficiency of customs administration and simplify business processes, the Kyrgyz Republic is implementing the Concept for the Development of the Customs Service, whose core principle is the transition from control to service.

The introduction of the “Smart Customs” system has resulted in a significant reduction in the time required for customs clearance: from 5 hours in 2018 to 58 minutes today.

Moreover, 46% of goods and vehicles pass through border checkpoints in less than 17 minutes.

Third, cross-border e-commerce is gaining increasing importance. We see great potential in the development of joint e-commerce platforms, logistics hubs, and financial instruments that ensure trust and security in online transactions. We believe it is important to support digital entrepreneurship and strengthen mechanisms for consumer protection in the digital environment.

It should be noted that the Kyrgyz Republic has achieved considerable progress on this front, though much more remains to be done.

In 2024, the volume of e-commerce in Kyrgyzstan reached USD 359.2 million. Today, e-commerce in our country is developing rapidly, and its average annual growth rate is projected to reach 13.5% by 2028 (according to ESBD, E-Commerce Database).

Every year we observe continuous growth in both the volume and number of payments processed through the banking system, including operations related to e-commerce. The volume of electronic payments, particularly those using QR-code technologies, is increasing especially fast.

Distinguished Participants,

On behalf of the Kyrgyz Republic, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the host country for its warm hospitality and the high level of preparation and organization of this ECO Ministerial Meeting.

The Kyrgyz Republic attaches great importance to cooperation within the ECO, including efforts to expand mutual trade, remove barriers, promote e-commerce, and deepen industrial cooperation among our countries.

The Economic Cooperation Organization has established itself as an effective mechanism for regional interaction and the advancement of common trade and economic priorities.

The Kyrgyz Republic reaffirms its readiness for constructive dialogue and practical cooperation within the ECO for the sake of sustainable growth and the prosperity of our entire region.

Thank you for your attention!