Economic Cooperation Organization
ECO

14th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport

15 October 2026
Astana- Republic of Kazakhstan

Astana Declaration

We, the Ministers/Heads of delegation of the Member States of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), met on 15 October 2026 in Astana to convene the 14th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport. While:

Highlighting our joint resolve to unleash the latent potential of enhanced transport and connectivity for economic development and welfare of our nations;

Reiterating the importance of the *Transit Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA)* as the guiding document for continued regional cooperation in transit transport within the ECO Region;

Reiterating the strategic importance of the enhanced intra-regional rail, road, maritime, air and multimodal connectivity for Member States as well as for the neighbouring countries and regions;

Recognizing the imperative of digitalization of transport sector and removing the bottlenecks encountering our efforts to enhance intra-regional connectivity;

Recognizing also the importance of end-to-end interoperability of digital transport solutions among interested Member States, while preserving the autonomy of existing national information systems, national data sovereignty, ownership and access rights;

Acknowledging the imperative of ECO partnership with relevant regional and international organizations, international financial institutions and development agencies to safeguard complementarity, sustainability, affordability and viability of its existing and future connectivity projects;

Supporting the joint efforts by the ECO Secretariat and the ECO Trade and Development Bank to effectively prepare for the "International Financing Conference for ECO Transport Corridors and Projects" to be held in July 2027; and

Recalling the "Almaty Outline Plan for the Development of the Transport sector in the ECO Region" adopted by the first ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport in the Republic of Kazakhstan in October 1993, and **remaining confident** that the 14th ECO Ministerial Meeting, hosted again by the Republic of Kazakhstan after 33 years, will open new chapters in our journey towards digitalized, resilient and competitive ECO connectivity networks;

Have resolved to:

1. **Re-endorse** our decisions contained in "Tehran Declaration" adopted at the 13th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport, and **request for** their continued implementation.

2. **Adopt** the *"ECO Sustainable and Resilient Transport Strategy for 2026–2035"* which aims to further boost the infrastructure modernization and digitalization, as well as to bring enhanced policy and institutional coordination and financial sustainability into the ECO transport sector. In this regard, r**equest** the ECO Secretariat to develop, in collaboration with the Member States and relevant partners, the necessary short-term and mid-term plans and programmes to translate the Strategy into action while maintaining possible synergy with Implementation Plan of the "*UN Decade of Sustainable Transport 2026 – 2035"*, and the "*Awaza Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries 2024-2034*".

3. **Emphasize** the serious need for full operationalization and commercialization of all ECO corridors, as well as other regional corridors passing through the ECO region with a view to serving more effectively the intra-regional, inter-regional and global trade.

4. **Reconfirm** our resolve to maximize transport and transit capacities at the ECO border crossing points while removing obstacles associated with customs procedures and formalities, visa arrangements, insurance coverage, eTIR operation, etc., in accordance with national legislation of all ECO Member States and applicable international agreements.

5. **Express** concern over the adverse impact of conflicts and serious disruptions on transport and civilian infrastructure in the region, the safety of transport operations and the free transport infrastructure and maintaining regional connectivity in accordance with international law.

6. **Encourage** and **facilitate** deeper participation of the private sector stakeholders in the policy making, planning and implementation of the ECO connectivity programmes, and in this regard **welcome** the meeting of the ECO private sectors on the sidelines of this Ministerial Meeting in Astana, including the dedicated Panel Session providing direct dialogue between public authorities and the private sector; **take note** of the recommendations formulated as its outcome, including prospective projects in the fields of transport, transit and logistics within and beyond the ECO region; and **recognize** that such recommendations may, as appropriate, be further developed and updated in consultation with interested Member States through the relevant ECO mechanisms, taking into account the implementation of the ECO Sustainable and Resilient Transport Strategy for 2026-2035, and **support** the initiatives such as ECO-TIR National Associations Consultative Group (ECO-TIRACG), ECO Freight Forwarders Association, etc.

7. **Strongly encourage** the international donor community, international financial institutions, regional and international development banks, and UN relevant bodies and regional commissions to actively participate in the "International Financing Conference for ECO Transport Corridors and Projects" to be held in 2027 and contribute to realization of its goals and objectives.

8. **Support** the Secretariat's initiatives to help implementation of the "Awaza Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries" in the ECO Region, and i**nvite** UN-OHRLLS, UN-ESCAP, UN-ECE, IsDB, AIIB, IRU, and other relevant regional and international partners to join the ECO in these efforts to the interests of its 7 landlocked Member States.

9. **Support** the ECO Secretariat and IsDB joint intention to direct the "ECO Gates Project Phase II" towards addressing the transport and transit related challenges faced by the ECO ports, including those affected by declining water levels of the Caspian Sea.

10. **Acknowledge** the significant role of ECO frontier provinces in promoting intra-regional trade and enhanced connectivity, and in this regard, **welcome** the progress made towards establishment of a Joint Trade Zone (JTZ) between Iran and Turkmenistan as the model possibly replicable in other ECO border crossing points, and **consider** the Model Agreement, prepared and circulated by the ECO Secretariat upon recommendation of the ECO Working Group on JTZ, as a useful tool available to the interested Member States.

11. **Emphasize** the critical importance of the enhanced ECO partnerships with relevant regional and international organizations and countries, including UNOHRLLS, UNECE, UNESCAP, IsDB, IRU, SCO, TRACECA, CAREC, and other relevant partners.

We express our gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan for excellent hosting of this Ministerial Meeting as well as warm hospitality extended to our delegations. We are also grateful to the ECO Secretary General, Dr. Asad M. Khan, and his team in the ECO Secretariat for effective and timely preparation of this Meeting.

We also welcome with appreciation offer of Turkmenistan to host the 15th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport in November 2027 in Ashgabat.

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