Economic Cooperation Organization
ECO

Report
The 14th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport

Preceded by
Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM)

14-15 October, 2026

Astana, Republic of Kazakhstan

Report

The 14th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport was held on 15th October, 2026 in Astana, hosted by the Ministry Transport of the Republic of Kazakhstan, preceded by the Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) on 14th October 2026, alongside the New Silk Way Transport and Logistics Forum, aimed to exchange views on measures to improve regional connectivity and transit. The Ministerial Meeting focused on shared priorities, including regional connectivity, transport digitalization, trade facilitation and provided an opportunity to strengthen cooperation among regional and international partners. The Honorable Ministers, Deputy Ministers and Heads of Delegations of Afghanistan, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Kazakhstan (Host), Kyrgyz Republic, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Republic of Türkiye, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan participated in the meeting. Moreover, the meeting was also attended by the representatives of regional and international organizations. The ECO Secretariat's delegation was headed by the Secretary General, H.E. Dr. Asad M. Khan. The list of the participants is attached as **Annex-I**.

Senior Official's Meeting on Transport (SOM)

2. The Senior Officials' Meeting on Transport (SOM) held on 14th October, 2026 discussed and finalized the Draft Agenda, Draft Astana Declaration and Draft *ECO Sustainable and Resilient Transport Strategy for 2026-2035* as well as Draft Report for the 14th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport. Additionally, the SOM reviewed the implementation of previous decisions, exchanged views on the current state of regional transport cooperation, and considered proposals for strengthening transit corridors and logistical linkages among member states. The meeting also harmonized positions on the above draft documents and recommended them for adoption by the Ministers during the 14th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport. Agenda and Annotated Agenda of SOM is attached as **Annex-II**.

3. H.E. Amb. Silapberdi Nurberdiyev, ECO Deputy Secretary General, welcomed the participants to the Senior Officials' Meeting, convened to finalize preparations for the 14th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport, and expressed sincere appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan for its hospitality and excellent arrangements in Astana. He recalled that the Senior Officials had two principal tasks before them: to review progress made since the last ECO Ministerial Meeting and to finalize preparations for the Ministerial Meeting the following day. Reporting on progress, he noted that the ECO Sustainable and Resilient Transport Strategy for 2026–2035 had been prepared in line with the Tehran Declaration and current regional and international developments, with emphasis to be placed on practical short- and medium-term actions. He further reported progress on several ECO transport corridors and highlighted continued cooperation with UNECE, the ECO–IRU Joint Action Plan, consultations on an ECO Digital Transport and Customs Office in Tashkent, continued support for the Awaza Programme of Action for landlocked countries, preparations for an International

Financing Conference in the first half of 2027, the development of an ECO–China cooperation mechanism in transport and transit, and two completed studies on corridor development and railway digital modelling. He concluded by reaffirming the Secretariat's commitment to advancing transport cooperation across the ECO region and to strengthening connectivity among its Member States. Copy of his statement is as **Annex-III**.

4. The ECO Director for Transport, Mr. Seyed Jalaledin Alavi Sabzevari, briefed the delegations on the Draft ECO Sustainable and Resilient Transport Strategy for 2026–2035, prepared in accordance with the ECO Vision 2025 pursuant to the mandate of the 13th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport. He referred to the Strategy's comprehensive roadmap for infrastructure development, regulatory coordination, sustainability, innovation and institutional cooperation across all modes of transport, together with its strategic vision for 2035, its strategic objectives, sectoral strategies, provisions on digitalization, cross-cutting priorities, implementation and monitoring arrangements, and the Phased Action Plan for 2026–2035. Emphasizing in particular the challenges encountered by landlocked countries, he underscored the importance of their uninterrupted access to regional and international markets and of strengthened cooperation among Member States and with regional and international partners in advancing the Strategy's objectives.

5. Ms. Zhanna JOLDASBEKOVA, Head of Delegation of Kazakhstan, welcomed the Senior Officials to this important event on Transport, convened in conjunction with the 14th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport. She noted that the deliberations of the day would centre upon two principal documents: Astana Declaration and the ECO Sustainable and Resilient Transport Strategy 2026–2035, the latter providing the guiding framework for the future development of transport cooperation across the region. It was observed as highly symbolic that transport ministers had gathered once again in Kazakhstan, where the first such meeting had been held in Almaty in 1993 where the Almaty Outline Plan for the Development of the Transport sector in the ECO Region" had been adopted. She extended gratitude to the ECO Secretariat for its joint efforts in preparing the event. In conclusion, she expressed the expectation that the meeting would yield a positive and substantive outcome for the ECO region, strengthening connectivity, facilitating trade, and advancing sustainable and resilient transport among all member States. Copy of her statement is as **Annex-IV**.

14th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport

Agenda Item No. 1
Inauguration of the Meeting:

6. H.E. Dr. Asad M. Khan, ECO Secretary General, welcomed the Ministers and Heads of Delegation to the 14th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport in Astana and expressed sincere appreciation to H.E. Mr. Nurlan Sauranbaev, Minister of Transport of Kazakhstan, for hosting the event and for the excellent arrangements and warm hospitality extended to the participants. He noted with pleasure that the Meeting was being held for the second consecutive year, following the Ministerial Meeting in Tehran in June 2025, and reaffirmed that, despite prevailing geopolitical challenges, ECO remained firmly committed to implementing the decisions and priorities set out in the Tehran Declaration. Emphasizing that connectivity extends beyond physical infrastructure, he stressed the need for a comprehensive approach combining investment in transport infrastructure with trade facilitation, harmonization of procedures and greater regional economic integration, aimed at creating an enabling ecosystem for regional connectivity.

7. He highlighted the significance of the proposed ECO Sustainable and Resilient Transport Strategy for 2026–2035, which complements the Strategic Goals of Economic Cooperation 2035, and identified the connectivity needs of the seven landlocked Member States as an important priority, recalling ECO's cooperation with regional and international partners in support of the Awaza Programme of Action. Noting that financing remained a principal challenge, he stressed the need to move towards concrete, economically viable and bankable projects, appreciated Kazakhstan's contribution through two studies on the KTI Corridor and on railway digitalization, and invited the support of Member States and international financial institutions in taking them forward. He welcomed the dedicated dialogue with the private sector, commended Kazakhstan for facilitating this engagement, and stated that the Astana Declaration, together with the new Strategy, would provide further impetus to collective efforts. He concluded by emphasizing that the task before the Meeting was to translate the shared vision into tangible results and wished the Ministerial Meeting every success. Copy of his statement is as **Annex-V**.

Election of the Chairman:

8. In accordance with the ECO Rules of Procedure, H.E. Mr. Zhanibek Taizhanov, Vice Minister of Transport of the Republic of Kazakhstan was unanimously elected as the Chairman of the "14th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport".

9. H.E. Mr. Zhanibek Taizhanov, Vice Minister of Transport of the Republic of Kazakhstan thanked the ECO Member States on his election as the Chairman of this important event and continued his statement.

10. Mr. Taizhanov welcomed the distinguished delegates to Astana. He appreciated the collective efforts and deliberations of the Senior Officials and the ECO Secretariat during the Senior Officials' Meeting, which centred upon two principal documents: the Draft Astana Declaration and the ECO Sustainable and Resilient Transport Strategy for 2026–2035. He expressed confidence that both documents would be adopted, the latter serving as the guiding framework for the development of transport cooperation across the region over the coming decade. Recalling that the first ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport had been held in Kazakhstan in 1993, at which the Almaty Outline Plan for the Development of the Transport Sector in the ECO Region had been adopted, he noted with satisfaction that the present Meeting, hosted once again by Kazakhstan after thirty-three years, marked a significant milestone in the collective journey towards digitalized, resilient, and competitive connectivity networks.

11. He emphasized the strategic importance of enhanced intra-regional rail, road, maritime, air, and multimodal connectivity, not only for the Member States but also for neighbouring countries and regions, and reaffirmed Kazakhstan's commitment to deepening collaboration and cooperation with all ECO Member States in removing bottlenecks, facilitating trade and transit, promoting the digitalization of transport, and ensuring the financial and environmental sustainability of regional corridors. He expressed confidence that the deliberations would yield a positive and substantive outcome, strengthening the unity of purpose among Member States and advancing the shared vision of a fully interconnected, sustainable, and prosperous ECO region. Copy of his statement is as **Annex-VI**.

Agenda Item No. 2
Adoption of the Agenda:

12. In the absence of any objection, the meeting adopted its agenda unanimously as proposed by the ECO Secretariat and finalized by the preceding Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) on 14 October, 2026. Copy of agenda of the meeting is as **Annex-VII**.

Agenda Item No.3
Statements by Ministers/Heads of Delegation

13. Under this agenda item, the honorable Ministers, Heads of Delegations delivered their statements and exchanged views on measures to improve regional connectivity and transit. In their remarks, they thanked and appreciated the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan for hosting this important meeting and for the excellent arrangements and warm hospitality extended to all participants. They underscored the shared priorities of regional connectivity, transport digitalization and trade facilitation, and welcomed the opportunity afforded by the Meeting to strengthen regional cooperation within the ECO and with regional and international partners. In the course of their deliberations, particular attention was given to the promotion of connectivity across the ECO region, including the special needs and challenges of landlocked countries, with emphasis on facilitating their uninterrupted access to regional and international markets, enhancing

transit links, removing border and logistical bottlenecks, and advancing sustainable and resilient transport networks for the benefit of all Member States. The Ministers and Heads of Delegation further emphasized the importance of sustained collective action, effective implementation of agreed priorities and closer coordination among Member States, regional organizations and international partners in realizing the shared objectives of enhanced connectivity, expanded trade and inclusive economic development throughout the ECO region. Statements shared by the Member States are attached as **Annex-VIII**.

Agenda Item No.4
Adoption of the Ministerial outcomes as finalized by SOM

14. The Meeting appreciated the excellent work done at the Senior Officials Meeting on 14th October 2026 as well as preceding online expert-level preparatory meetings and adopted the **ECO Sustainable and Resilient Transport Strategy 2026-2035 and Astana Declaration.** The delegation of **Kyrgyz Republic** expressed some observation regarding the handling of customs systems, air transport and corridor management in the Strategy. Accordingly, Kyrgyz Republic may revert back to these issues at the later stage when the relevant action plans for implementation of Strategy will be developed.

15. The meeting requested the Member States to ensure effective implementation of the measures and decisions contained in these two outcome documents. The Ministerial Meeting also adopted its final Report. Copies of the documents are enclosed as **Annex-IX and X**.

Agenda Item No.5
Closing Remarks:

16. The Ministers and Heads of Delegations of the Member States in their closing remarks expressed their gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan for excellent hosting of the Meeting and applauded H.E. Mr. Zhanibek Taizhanov, Vice Minister of Transport of the Republic of Kazakhstan for excellent chairmanship of the Meeting. They also thanked the ECO Secretariat for the professional arrangements and conduct towards the success of this meeting.

17. In his closing remarks, Dr. Asad M. Khan, ECO Secretary General, thanked the host Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and remarked that the future of transport in the ECO region lies in a fully interconnected, sustainable, and digitalized network that transcends borders and unlocks the latent potential of our nations. The effective implementation of the Astana Declaration and the ECO Sustainable and Resilient Transport Strategy for 2026–2035 will be pivotal in transforming our shared vision into tangible outcomes, ensuring that our corridors serve not only the region but also act as vital bridges connecting Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Beyond the ECO, these efforts will contribute to global trade and transit, reinforcing our role as a reliable and resilient hub in an increasingly interconnected world.

18. While thanking the Member States for their active participation, the Chairman announced the closing of the Meeting.

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