

Second (Joint) Meeting of the ECO Committees
Education and Research Committee
ECO Digital Library Committee
Preservation, Manuscripts and Rare Books Committee

16 June 2026 – Online

The second meeting of the ECO Committees was held online on 16 June 2026 as a joint session of the Education and Research Committee, the ECO Digital Library Committee, and the Preservation, Manuscripts and Rare Books Committee. The meeting was organized in accordance with the decisions adopted at the 7th Conference of Directors of Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Member States' National Libraries.

1. Participation

List of Attendance:

Country	Organization/Instution	Full Name	Presenter/Committee Member
Afghanistan	Directorate of Public Libraries	Fraidoon Zahid	Presenter/Committee Member
Afghanistan	Directorate of public Libraries	Khalid Khan Orya	Committee Member
Azerbaijan	National Library of the Republic of Azerbaijan	Abdullayeva Gulsaida	Committee Member
Iran	Office for Research in Librarianship and Education	Mrs. Mahboobeh Ghorbani	Committee Member
Iran	National Library and Archives of Iran	Dr. Amir Khaghani	Presenter
Kazakhstan	National Library of the Republic of Kazakhstan	Ali Mukhametkazyev	Presenter
Tajikistan	National Library of the Republic of Tajikistan	Salima Rajabzoda	Committee Member
Tajikistan	National Library of the Republic of Tajikistan	Shukrona Qurbonova	Presenter
Uzbekistan	National Library of Uzbekistan	Obodboy Klichbayev	Committee Member
Uzbekistan	National Library of Uzbekistan	Gulbahor Kabiljanova	Presenter
Türkiye	Directorate General for Libraries and Publications	Mehmet Laçinkaya	Presenter/Committee Member

2025-27 Secretary:

Republic of Türkiye – Merve Yavuzdemir – Head of the Foreign Relations Department, Directorate General for Libraries and Publications
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Republic of Türkiye – Serap Fidancı – Librarian, Directorate General for Libraries and Publications
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Republic of Türkiye – Aslıhan Ayça Yıldız – Librarian, Directorate General for Libraries and Publications
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Observers:

ECO Cultural Institute (ECI) – Dr. Zahra Aslani
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The National Library of the Kyrgyz Republic, The State Library of the State Culture Center of Turkmenistan and the National Library of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan were not represented at the meeting, as no committee members had been designated by these institutions. The designated committee members from the National Academic Library of the Republic of Kazakhstan was unable to attend.

2. Opening Remarks

The meeting commenced with opening remarks delivered by the Secretariat, hosted by the Directorate General for Libraries and Publications of the Republic of Türkiye. During the opening presentation, an overview was provided of the committee-based cooperation mechanism established following the 7th Conference of Directors of National Libraries of the ECO Member States, together with the progress achieved since the inaugural committee meetings. The Secretariat recalled the decisions adopted during the first committee meetings and outlined the objectives and expected outcomes of the joint session, emphasizing the exchange of national experiences, the sharing of good practices, the identification of common areas of interest, and the exploration of future opportunities for regional cooperation among the national libraries of the ECO Member States.

3. Country Presentations

3.1. Afghanistan

The representative of the Directorate of Public Libraries of Afghanistan provided an overview of the country's public library system, which currently consists of 105 public libraries, more than 30 private libraries, and 12 mobile libraries operating across the country. The presentation highlighted Afghanistan's efforts to preserve cultural heritage and promote reading through its library network, while also emphasizing ongoing modernization initiatives. Key projects include the development of a centralized public library database, the digitization of rare and valuable books, the establishment of digital library infrastructure, the renovation of reading halls and children's sections, and the expansion of mobile library services. The representative further noted that Afghanistan seeks stronger regional and international cooperation, particularly in the areas of staff training, digitization technologies, access to specialized scanning equipment, and resource-sharing arrangements with ECO member states.

3.2. Azerbaijan

The representative of Azerbaijan, Ms. Abdullayeva Gulsaida, expressed her appreciation for the establishment of the committee-based cooperation mechanism and reaffirmed Azerbaijan's willingness to actively participate in future activities. She emphasized the importance of strengthening cooperation among the ECO member states and expressed her confidence that the committees would provide a valuable platform for the exchange of knowledge and experience.

3.3. Iran

The representative of the National Library and Archives of Iran presented the institution's ongoing activities in the fields of manuscript preservation, digital transformation, and research. The presentation highlighted efforts to safeguard documentary heritage through digital preservation, the development of AI-enabled library services, and data governance initiatives. Proposals were also introduced for strengthening regional cooperation, including the establishment of a shared digital repository for manuscript heritage among ECO member states (ECO Manuscript Heritage Bank). The representative emphasized the importance of collaboration in digital preservation, the harmonization of standards, professional capacity building, and joint research initiatives.

3.4. Kazakhstan

The representative of the National Library of the Republic of Kazakhstan presented the institution's activities in the areas of documentary heritage preservation, digital transformation, and professional capacity building. The presentation highlighted digitization initiatives, the Kazakhstan National Electronic Library (KazNEB), the preservation of rare books and manuscripts, and professional training programs for librarians. The representative also emphasized opportunities for strengthening cooperation among ECO member states through digital preservation technologies, artificial intelligence applications, knowledge exchange, and joint cultural heritage projects.

3.5. Tajikistan

The representative of the National Library of the Republic of Tajikistan shared information on the institution's activities concerning the preservation of manuscripts and rare books. During the remarks, the importance of manuscript heritage as an essential part of the country's cultural and scholarly legacy was emphasized, together with ongoing efforts to collect, catalogue, preserve, and make these collections accessible to researchers. The representative also highlighted the National Library's continued commitment to safeguarding manuscript heritage for future generations.

3.6. Uzbekistan

The representative of the National Library of Uzbekistan provided an overview of the institution's priorities, projects that supported by UNESCO and ongoing initiatives in the fields of manuscript and rare book preservation, education and research, and digital library development. Information was also shared on activities related to digital transformation, the

preservation of cultural heritage, professional capacity building, and knowledge sharing. The representative further emphasized the importance of strengthening technical cooperation and developing joint projects among the ECO member states.

3.7. Türkiye

The representative of the Directorate General for Libraries and Publications of the Republic of Türkiye delivered a comprehensive presentation on the National Library's digital library services and AI-driven transformation initiatives. The presentation introduced the National Digital Library infrastructure, digital access services, AI-supported cataloguing and information discovery solutions, and the technical expertise developed through large-scale digitization activities. The representative also proposed the establishment of a regional ECO digital library platform, collaborative development of AI-powered OCR technologies, and sustainable mechanisms for technical knowledge exchange and cooperation among the ECO member states.

4. Closing

During the closing session, the Secretariat proposed that the next joint meeting of the ECO Committees be held in November 2026, and the proposal was endorsed by the participating member states. It was agreed that the meeting would focus on the preparations for the Regional Roadmap towards 2027, including the review of ongoing committee activities and the planning of priorities and joint initiatives for the coming year.

In this regard, the Secretariat noted that the country presentations delivered by the member states, as summarized above, would be further examined in detail. Following this review, a SWOT analysis will be conducted for each member state in order to identify existing strengths, needs, opportunities, and possible areas for cooperation. Based on these analyses, a comparative matrix will be prepared to provide a clearer overview of common priorities, shared challenges, and potential fields of joint action among the national libraries of the ECO member states.

The Secretariat also stated that, if deemed necessary, a survey may be conducted among the committee members in order to establish a common understanding and collect further structured input for the preparation of the roadmap. On the basis of the country presentations, SWOT analyses, matrix study, and possible survey results, a draft Regional Roadmap towards 2027 will be prepared and circulated to the committee members in the autumn period of 2026 for their comments and feedback.

It was further agreed that the final draft of the Regional Roadmap towards 2027 would be presented to the committee members during the third joint committee meeting, planned to be held in November 2026. Following the discussions and final contributions received during the meeting, the document is expected to be finalized. In this way, the committees aim to initiate concrete joint activities and practical cooperation before the 8th Conference of Directors of National Libraries of the ECO Member States, to be held in 2027.

The Secretariat also noted that communication and coordination among committee members had been effectively maintained through e-mail and WhatsApp groups and emphasized the importance of continuing active communication through these channels until the next meeting. Furthermore, participants were informed that a dedicated webpage for the ECO Conference of Directors of National Libraries of the Member States of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) would be established on the website of the National Library of Türkiye. The webpage will provide access to information on the Committees conducted under the 7th Conference, the committees established under the Conference, as well as reports, presentations, and other relevant documents from the first and second committee meetings.

The meeting concluded with appreciation for the active participation and valuable contributions of all participants. The importance of maintaining close cooperation, regular communication, and practical collaboration among the committees was reaffirmed in order to support the implementation of the Regional Roadmap towards 2027 and further strengthen regional cooperation among the national libraries of the ECO member states.