

JOINT STATEMENT
7TH CONFERENCE OF DIRECTORS OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION
ORGANIZATION (ECO) MEMBER STATES' NATIONAL LIBRARIES

20 NOVEMBER 2025 – ANKARA, TÜRKİYE

The Directors of the National Libraries of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Member States convened in Ankara on 20 November 2025 to review ongoing cooperation, exchange national perspectives, and explore opportunities to strengthen regional collaboration in the field of librarianship and cultural heritage.

The meeting was attended by representatives of the following national and international institutions:

- National Library of Afghanistan
- National Library of Azerbaijan
- National Library and Archives of Iran
- National Library of the Republic of Kazakhstan
- National Academic Library of the Republic of Kazakhstan
- National Library of the Republic of Uzbekistan
- National Library of the Republic of Tajikistan
- Directorate General for Libraries and Publications, the Republic of Türkiye
- Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Environment of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (Observer)

In addition, the conference was attended by representatives of:

- Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO)
- ECO Cultural Institute (ECI)

1. Shared Commitments

The Parties reaffirm their common commitment to safeguarding the cultural heritage of the ECO region, enhancing equitable access to information, and reinforcing the institutional capacity of national libraries in line with global trends in digital transformation and cultural diplomacy.

The Parties further acknowledge the importance of digitalization, knowledge exchange, open access infrastructures, and long-term preservation efforts as essential components of modern library development.

2. Observations and Points Noted

The Parties take note of the national presentations delivered during the meeting, including the strategic priorities of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Türkiye and the TRNC.

The Parties also take note of proposals relating to bibliographic cooperation, staff exchange, training needs, cultural diplomacy initiatives, and the suggestion to develop a practical roadmap to guide joint activities.

3. Chairmanship and Hosting

The Parties record the unanimous election of Mr. Taner BEYOĞLU, Director General for Libraries and Publications of the Republic of Türkiye, as Chair (2025–2027) of the ECO Conference of Directors of National Libraries.

The Parties welcome the offer of the National Library of Kazakhstan to host the 8th Conference in 2027.

4. Committee Structure

The Parties agree to establish the following committees, in alignment with the ECO Charter and based on Member States' expressed needs:

1. ECO Digital Library Committee (*Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Türkiye*)
2. Preservation, Manuscripts and Rare Books Committee (*Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan*)
3. Education and Research Committee (*Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Iran, Afghanistan*)
4. Coordination and Cooperation Committee (*coordinated jointly by ECO and ECI with the chairing country*)

The Parties further agree that these committees shall meet biannually, hold regular online sessions, prepare progress reports for the Chair, and facilitate the participation of non-attending Member States through research contributions.

The Parties also note that consultations will be held with Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan—who were unable to attend the meeting—to determine their participation in the newly established committees, and that relevant arrangements will be made in line with their expressed preferences.

5. Digital Platform

The Parties endorse the transfer of management of the econl.org digital platform from the National Library of Iran to the National Library of Türkiye, under the leadership of the Chair, and support its development as a shared regional hub for knowledge exchange.

6. Forward-Looking Actions

The Parties request the development of a Regional Roadmap to guide joint activities and measurable progress until the 2027 meeting.

The Parties further invite Member States to identify priority areas for staff exchange, training, bibliographic cooperation, preservation techniques, and joint cultural programming.

7. Appreciation

The Parties express their appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Türkiye, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and the General Directorate of Libraries and Publications for their warm hospitality and the successful organization of the 7th Conference of Directors of Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Member States' National Libraries.