

37th Meeting of the Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) of ECI

April 10, 2023

Draft Report

The Council of Permanent Representatives of ECO Cultural Institute (ECI) convened its 37th meeting at the ECI Headquarters on April 10, 2023. The meeting began under the chairpersonship of Mr. Seyed Jalaledin Alavi Sabzevari, Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Ambassadors and representatives of ECI Member States, namely the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Tajikistan and Republic of Türkiye as well as a delegation of the ECO Cultural Institute headed by ECI President also attended the Meeting. (List of Participants is enclosed as Annex. I).

At the beginning of the Meeting, the Chairman acknowledged with appreciation the presence of the Representative of the Republic of Türkiye and welcomed membership of Türkiye in ECI.

Agenda item 1

- The draft agenda of the Meeting had been circulated among Member States via Note No. ECI/524/102 dated March 30, 2023. The agenda with some amendments as proposed by Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran was unanimously adopted as follows:
 1. Adoption of the Agenda
 2. Consideration and adoption of the draft report of the previous ECOCI-CPR meeting
 3. Statement by ECOCI President on the ECOCI activities
 4. Administrative issues:
 - Consideration of the status of the ECOCI's presidency
 5. Budgetary issues:
 - Latest status of contributions and arrears of the ECOCI member states
 6. Preparation for the 7th meeting of the ECOCI Board of Trustees (BoT)
 7. Progress report on "ECO Youth Award"
 8. Any other Business
 9. Date and venue of the next meeting

Agenda item 2

Consideration and adoption of the Draft Report of the Previous ECOCI-CPR Meeting

- The draft report of the 36th ECOCI-CPR meeting had been circulated among the Member States via Note No. ECI/524/626 dated January 15, 2023.

Representative of the Republic of Türkiye expressed Türkiye's satisfaction at accession to the ECO Cultural Institute and assured the Meeting of the support of his country to the Institute's activities. He further mentioned that the Embassy of the Republic of Türkiye had not received the draft report of the 36th ECOCI-CPR meeting and would not be in a position to adopt it. Therefore, the ECOCI was requested to provide the Embassy with the aforesaid draft report.

The Council decided to postpone adoption of the draft report of the 36th meeting to the next meeting.

Agenda item 3

Statement by ECOCI President on the ECOCI activities

- Under this item, Mr. Murodjon Buriboev, ECOCI President, made his statement and briefed the Meeting on the activities of the Institute since last CPR meeting. Statement of the ECI President is attached to this report as annex II.

The Chairman and the participating Member States expressed their views on the activities and thanked ECI President and his team for their efforts.

Agenda item 4

Administrative issues:

- Consideration of the status of the ECOCI's presidency

Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan congratulated the Meeting on the occasions of Holy month of Ramadan and Nowruz. He further congratulated the Republic of Türkiye for accession to ECI. He also thanked the President of the ECOCI for his able stewardship of the Institute. Furthermore, he appreciated the hard work by the Executive Director and the staff members of the Institute.

The Ambassador emphasized that Pakistan attaches the highest of importance to the ECOCI. He further elaborated that the laws of his country require certain procedures

which is hoped to be completed in two weeks. The nominee would be determined by the time. He regretted the delay in announcing the nomination and requested the ECOCI-CPR to consider extending the tenure of the incumbent president until the assumption of duties by the Pakistani nominee.

In response to a query by the Chair of the meeting regarding the time required for the nominee to join the ECOCI, the Ambassador said the nomination would be followed by administrative matters and visa procedures as usual which would not take much time.

Chair noted that since the meeting of the Institute's Board of Trustees would be ahead, it would be better if the ECOCI President would continue with his tenure until the new President would join in. It would be hoped that the nomination would be determined before the BoT meeting so that the appointment issue would be incorporated in the agenda of the BoT meeting for its decision.

He added that the outgoing and the incoming presidents would coordinate the date of joining. He proposed that the Council may extend the tenure of the incumbent President for three months or until the date of joining of the new President, whichever would come first.

Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan first congratulated the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on assumption of the Chairpersonship of the ECOCI-CPR meeting and felicitated the delegation of Türkiye for joining the Institute. He added that the Republic of Türkiye is one of the most active countries in the Economic Cooperation Organization. By contribution of the new member state, the ECO Cultural Institute would function more smoothly.

He noted that since the BoT meeting would be held in the coming months and to avoid vacuum in leadership of the ECOCI, it would be proposed that the incumbent President would continue with his tenure until the assumption of duties by the new president. The Ambassador emphasized that it would be helpful in better preparation for BoT meeting and the activities of ECO Cultural Institute.

ECI-CPR agreed to recommend that the tenure of the incumbent president would be extended for three months (end of July2023),_or the date of assumption of the duties by the new President from the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, whichever comes first.

The approval of the Bot/COM will be sought through silence procedure.

Agenda item 5

Budgetary issues:

- Latest status of contributions and arrears of the ECOCI member states

Chair, in the capacity as the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, informed that an amount of 220,000 USD will soon be paid by Iran to settle part of its arrears. He hoped that the rest of Iran's arrears would be cleared during its chairpersonship. He also appreciated the recent payments made by the Republic of Tajikistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan informed that Pakistan for its part is trying to expedite its payments at the earliest. He hoped that the Member State would make another contribution by next month.

Representative of the Republic of Türkiye said that since his country is a new member to the ECOCI, it would be required to learn about the calculation method of the rate of contribution for the current year. He declared that Türkiye would acknowledge its annual contribution to the ECOCI for the year 2023. He also alluded to the relevant table which was provided by the ECOCI and proposed that the outstanding arrears and due contributions of the Member States should be indicated in two separate columns.

Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan supported the idea expounded by the Representative of the Republic of Türkiye and highlighted the point that Tajikistan had been paying its annual contribution to the budget of the ECOCI regularly.

Chair requested the ECOCI to revise the relevant tables as recommended by the members of the Council. Hence, a separate column would be needed to reflect the due annual contribution of the Member States for the year 2023. He further spelled out that the so-called ECO founding member states are responsible for 75 percent of the ECOCI annual budget. However, and in the recent past, a fixed amount of 171,500 USD has been paid by Iran and Pakistan. For the 2023, this fixed amount will also be applied for Türkiye ((171,500 USD). For the next years, there is a need for new scales of assessment where the 75 percent will be divided between the three ECO founding Member States, i.e., Iran, Pakistan and Türkiye, 25 percent each.

He further noted that from a legal perspective, Türkiye's membership in the ECOCI had been started since March 2022 when the Member State deposited the instrument of ratification. In other words, the Country would be in arrears as of March 2022.

Representative of the Republic of Türkiye clarified that as per the domestic rules of Türkiye, depositing instrument of ratification would not suffice to complete the

procedure of accession. He noted that despite the ratification of the Charter of the ECOCI in the first quarter of 2022, the completion of the procedure still required the presidential decree to bring it into force.

With this clarification, the Council agreed that the Republic of Türkiye would not be in arrears for 2022 and would pay its due contribution (171,500 USD) for the year 2023.

Regarding the outstanding arrears of the Republic of Tajikistan, Chair reminded that he in the capacity of the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, proposed in the previous ECOCI-CPR meetings that Tajikistan might convey an official request to the Institute for inclusion of the issue of write-off in the agenda of the upcoming BoT meeting.

Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan explained that the Embassy had requested the ECOCI for a report on the details of the outstanding arrears of Tajikistan. The report was recently received by the Embassy and was forwarded to the concerned authorities of Tajikistan. It would be hoped that the response would be received in coming days so that the proposal of Tajikistan would be discussed in the future ECOCI-CPR meeting.

Chair assured that when the request of Tajikistan would be received, the issue will be included in the agenda of the ECOCI-CPR to be recommended to the upcoming BoT meeting. If the request is not received by that time, it will be submitted to the 8th BoT meeting.

Agenda item 6

Preparation for the 7th meeting of the ECOCI Board of Trustees (BoT)

ECOCI Executive Director elaborated that according to Article III of the Charter of ECO Cultural Institute, the Board of Trustees shall meet biennially/triennially by rotation in the territories of the Member States. The last BoT meeting was held in 2015, and the seventh meeting of the BoT was postponed due to some reasons. Finally, the Islamic Republic of Iran proposed to hold this meeting in Tehran. So far, four coordination meetings with the organizers of the BoT meeting have been held. The date of the BoT meeting would be June 15 preceded by High Level Expert Group (HLEG) Meeting to be held on June 14. This is also intended to invite Ministers of Culture of the non- ECI member countries Theme of the Meeting has been proposed as “Strengthening Friendship and Building a Shared Cultural World”. The draft agenda of the Meeting has been circulated for comments latest by next ECOCI-CPR. He also informed the Meeting that the host and the Secretariat may also add some more issues for consideration by the Member States.

He further informed that at the proposal of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, the ECOCI would draft a Three-year Action Plan for later consideration by the Member States.

Chair requested the Member States to forward the draft agenda to the concerned authorities in their respective countries and seek their views/observations.

He further elaborated that the host authorities intend to invite the culture ministers of all the ECO Member States. In that case, an extended meeting to be attended by the ministers of the ECO Member States would be held in addition to the BoT meeting.

Speaking in the capacity of the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Chair informed that the host authorities need the confirmation and level of participation of the ECOCI Member States in the upcoming BoT meeting. He further sought clarification from delegations of Türkiye and Pakistan on the possible impacts of their upcoming national elections on the level of participation in the BoT meeting. Representative of the Republic of Türkiye informed that the election would take place in May. It could not be certain whether the government would be still with the same ministers or there would be a reshuffling or another cabinet.

Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan thanked the Islamic Republic of Iran for organizing the BoT meeting which is a very important meeting. He informed that no election is scheduled at the same time as the BoT meeting. Further developments would be conveyed, if any.

Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan also informed that there would be no problem for participation of Tajikistan in the BoT meeting.

Chair referred to two agenda items of the upcoming BoT meeting. i.e., Action Plan and the draft Tehran Declaration and noted that although the items would be discussed in the High Level Experts Group meeting to be held before the BoT meeting, the Member States should receive them well in advance. He emphasized that the aforesaid documents should be drafted based on views which would be received from the Member States.

Chair requested the ECOCI to circulate a note among the Member States seeking their contribution for preparation of above drafts. The issues need to be considered by the ECOCI-CPR in its next meeting. He also requested the Member States to share their relevant observations and proposals with the ECOCI.

Agenda item 7

Progress report on “ECO Youth Award”

ECOCI Executive Director elaborated that during last year ECO Cultural Institute proposed the ECO Youth Award project due to the important role of youth as the major driving force for the ECO countries development and the need for planning to maximize their optimal participation in activities implemented by the Institute. He further briefed the Meeting on consultations with the previous CPR meetings, ECO Deputy Secretary General for International Affairs, ECO Legal Advisor and the 10th meeting of the Institute’s Executive Committee (April 27, 2022, with the participation of the Cultural Attachés of the ECO Member States).

The Executive Director also informed the Meeting about the ECO Cultural Institute intention to attract sponsors from all over the ECO region. In addition, trusted sponsors from the host country are being identified, and after the completion of the identification process, the full details will be provided to the ECOCI-CPR. The remarks by the ECI Executive Director is attached as annex

Chair hoped that the next ECOCI-CPR meeting would come to a conclusion on the Award. He noted that the ECO Secretariat is planning to hold a ministerial meeting on youth and Iran is likely to host the meeting. The ECOCI may check that with the ECO. It would be a good opportunity for the Institute to finalize the required procedure for the Award and the awarding ceremony may be held in the presence of the ministers of Youth Affairs of all Member States.

Chair further emphasized that the ECOCI should seek the approval of the ECOCI-CPR before engaging with a sponsorship. Therefore, the Institute needs to share the list of the sponsors before making commitments.

ECOCI Executive Director clarified that the Institute has just started negotiating with the potential sponsors. Following the final decision of the ECOCI-CPR on the Award, a plan of action for sponsorship could be prepared by the Institute to be shared with all the Member States.

Chair noted that the ECOCI should inform all the Member States via a circular Note Verbal, offering the possibility of sponsorship and the Member States may share the issue with the concerned authorities in their respective countries accordingly. In this way, a list of sponsors could be received officially from the Member States and the type of contributions would be specified.

Agenda item 8

Any other business

Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan queried whether Afghanistan would be invited to attend the BoT meeting or not? What would be the position of the host country? Whether the matter would be discussed before the BoT meeting or not.

Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan queried about the rules of procedure of the ECOCI in this regard. Whether the rules of procedure of the ECOCI is the same as the ECO. Whether the decisions of the ECO are binding on ECI because it's another organization and technically not a subordinate organization.

Chair clarified that the ECOCI is not considered subordinate to the ECO but its rules and regulations have been borrowed from the ECO. He reminded the ECI Member States that the same issue is now under consideration in ECO-CPR and Secretary General has been mandated to consult with all Member States. Therefore, it is advisable to wait for the ECO decision on the matter.

The Council agreed to suspend the issue until the decision of the ECO would be made.

Agenda item 9

Date and venue of the next meeting

Chair noted that it would be preferred to hold another ECOCI-CPR meeting at least two weeks before the upcoming BoT meeting to address the required issues.

The exact date of the next meeting would be informed by the ECOCI after consultation with the Chair of the meeting and the Member States.

At the end of the Meeting, President of ECOCI expressed his sincere gratitude to the Member states for their kind decision extending his tenure as the president of the ECOCI. He further assured that as the president, he will make every effort till the last moment for excellent implementation of the Institute plans and activities.

Annex-I

**The 37th Meeting of
The ECI Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR)**

List of Participants

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran:

- Mr. Seyed Jaleddin Alavi Sabzevari, Director General for Multilateral and International Economic Cooperation
- Mr. Khavari, Expert, ECO Affairs Bureau

Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan:

- H.E. Mr. Rahim Hayat Qureshi, Ambassador
- Mr. Ahmed Shami, Counsellor

Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan:

- H.E. Dr. Nizomiddin Zohidi, Ambassador
- Mr. Bahrom Azimov, Second Secretary

Embassy of the Republic of Türkiye:

- Mr. Mehmet Zahit Uzun, Counsellor

ECO Cultural Institute:

- Mr. Murodjun Buriboev, President
- Dr. Esmaeili Fard, Executive Director
- Ms. Mirbagheri, External Relations
- Mr. Sayed Javad Mirkazemian, Accounts Officer
- Mr. Shah Mansur Khojeov, Tajikistan's Desk Officer
- Ms. Mahtab Sahel, Afghanistan's Desk Officer
- Mr. Mehdi Omraninejad, Expert

ECO Secretariat:

- Mr. Amir Mohammad Javaheri, Translator

Annex-II

**Statement by President of ECO Cultural Institute
Mr. Murodjon Buriboev**

**Mr. Chairman,
Honorable Ambassadors and Representatives of the Member States ,
Ladies and Gentlemen ,**

I would like to welcome all Your Excellencies to the 37th meeting of the ECOCI-CPR and take this opportunity to thank you for attendance in this meeting.

Also, I should like to express my special thanks and welcome to the distinguished Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye for attending this meeting for the first time.

Excellencies,
Since the last meeting of ECOCI-CPR in December 2022 we have conducted a variety of activity as follows:

Excellencies,
The ECO Cultural Institute took part in the 33rd meeting of the ECO Regional Planning Council (RPC), held on January 16, 2023, in which the ECOCI President elaborated on the Institute's activities over the last year which received the admiration of the participating delegations.

Also, despite financial difficulties, the Institute participated in the 26th meeting of the Council of Ministers (CoM), held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, on January 24, 2023 in which the foreign ministers of the ECO member states and presidents of the ECO specialized agencies including the ECOCI attended. On the sidelines of the meeting, the report of the activities of the Institute over the past three years were distributed among the participating delegations. Also, during the same trip, the ECOCI President met with the First Deputy Minister of Culture of the Republic of Uzbekistan at the Ministry in Tashkent on January 25, 2023. At the meeting the ECOCI President briefed the First Deputy Minister on the goals and objectives of the Institute as well as its activities for promotion of arts, culture, literature and tourism of the ECO Member States including Uzbekistan. The First Deputy Minister expressed full support of the Ministry of Culture of Uzbekistan for the ECOCI activities and hoped that his country plays a more active role in future events to be organized by the Institute.

Furthermore, the Institute took part in the 5th meeting of the Board of Trustees of ECO Science Foundation which was held in Isfahan on February 14, 2023. During the trip to Isfahan, the ECOCI President, met with Ali Ghasemzadeh, the Mayor of Isfahan, at Isfahan Municipality on Monday, February 13, 2023. During the meeting, the ECOCI President elaborated on the activities of the ECO Cultural Institute in various fields and made proposals for mutual cooperation including holding a meeting of the Council of Permanent Representatives of ECO Cultural Institute in Isfahan, offering sightseeing tours in Isfahan for diplomats, dedicating a special section to ECO member states in the International Film Festival for Children and Youth which is held annually in

Isfahan. The Mayor of Isfahan welcomed the proposals and demonstrated readiness for joint cooperation. Also, the ECOCI President met with Reza Mokhtari, the President of Payame Noor University of Isfahan Province on February 15. At the meeting, the two sides discussed the joint cooperation approaches, emphasizing tourism and cultural collaboration between the universities of the ECO member states and Payame Noor University.

Dear Colleagues,

Youth affairs are always top priority for the ECO Cultural Institute. In this regard, ECOCI contributed to the 36th Khwarizmi International Festival and the 24th Khwarizmi Youth Award. At the closing ceremony, three of the laureates of this festival were awarded certificates by ECO Cultural Institute.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As envisaged in the Charter of the ECOCI, promotion of sports activities is considered a key goal for the Institute. To this end, on the occasion of Nowruz, a futsal tournament was organized by the ECO Cultural Institute in partnership with Abrar Moaser Institute for International Studies and Research for the diplomats residing in Iran and was held on March 9, 2023, in Tehran. Nine teams in three groups competed in the tournament, including: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran, Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), ECO Cultural Institute and the embassies of Russia, Tajikistan, Vietnam, Turkey, Malaysia and South Korea. In the closing ceremony of these competitions, prizes were awarded to the members of the first to fourth teams. The team from the Malaysian Embassy became the champion and Turkey won the third place.

Excellencies,

To preserve common intangible heritage of the ECO region, Nowruz 1402 (March 2023) was celebrated during a ceremony which was jointly organized by the ECO Secretariat) and the ECO Cultural Institute and held at the ECOCI's Headquarters on March 13, 2023. At the event, the ECO Secretary General, President of the ECO Cultural Institute, Ambassadors of the Republic of Tajikistan and Kazakhstan to I.R. Iran, the Vice President for Cultural Cooperation and NGOs of Public Diplomacy Center of Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Vice President for the Development of Scientific and Cultural Cooperation of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization, along with Afghan scholars delivered their speeches. The event was televised by the Iranian Jam-e-Jam TV to be aired during Nowruz.

Regarding publications of ECOCI, we published a special issue of our quarterly journal, ECO Heritage, on tourist attractions of Sari city, capital of Mazandaran Province in Iran. As you may be aware, Sari, was selected as the tourism capital of ECO for the year 2022.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Institute attaches special importance to participation in the events related to culture and literature which are organized by the organization of the host country. In this regard, the ECOCI took part in the closing ceremony of The World Award for Book of the Year of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the 9th meeting of Persian learning institutes across the world held in Tehran, the closing ceremony of the 17th Fajr International Poetry Festival, Tree planting ceremony by female diplomats and so on.

Dear colleagues,

Thanks to the payment of part of annual contribution by the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the full amount of due contribution by the Republic of Tajikistan, the Institute narrowly avoided closure. Also, the good news is that a considerable amount is going to be paid as the contribution of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the ECOCI's budget.

However, the esteemed member states are requested to kindly take necessary measures for acceleration in payment of their due contribution and outstanding arrears. The details of the latest status of payments and arrears of the member states will be provided under the relevant agenda item.

Once again, I would like to express my gratitude to you for taking part in this meeting.

Thank you.