

Report

Virtual Coordination Meeting of Focal Points on the Discussion of Concept Note on the Establishment of the D-8 Media Excellence Center in Azerbaijan

13 August 2025

A. Participants

Participant list is enclosed in the report.

B. Introduction

On 13 August 2025, a virtual coordination meeting was convened to discuss the concept note on the establishment of the D-8 Media Excellence Center (D-8 MEC), proposed by the Republic of Azerbaijan. The meeting was attended by representatives (focal points) of D-8 Member States.

The meeting was chaired by H.E. Ambassador Mustafa Özcan, Director-I of the D-8 Secretariat, who delivered opening remarks, highlighting that media shapes global perceptions and drives narratives, making this initiative a significant step to amplify the collective voice of the D-8 Member States. He stated that the Center is expected to serve as a platform for content sharing, capacity building, training, and innovation in media technologies, while also fostering cultural ties, countering disinformation, and enhancing the Organization's global visibility.

Ambassador Özcan also proposed that, once the Center is formally endorsed by the members, a one-year action plan should be developed by the relevant authorities in coordination with the Secretariat and shared with Member States. Ambassador Özcan added that this practice should be implemented regularly by all existing affiliated bodies of D-8, underlining that such a plan could include capacity-building programmes, workshops and seminars. He added that the proposed center should submit reports of its activities regularly after being formally established. Ambassador Özcan also suggested that a date for the inauguration of the center be conveyed to the Secretariat after its formal establishment. He encouraged open dialogue among Member States to ensure the proposal aligns with shared goals.

Following his remarks, the floor was first given to the representative of Azerbaijan, as host, and later the representatives of Member States to present their views, feedback, and suggestions on the proposed concept note for the D-8 MEC. The discussion focused on the scope, structure, and operational modalities of the proposed Center, with an emphasis on collaborative projects, capacity building, and information sharing.

C. Remarks from Member States:

1. The Republic of Azerbaijan

Mr. Elmar Mammadov, the Head of Economic Cooperation Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan provided background on the initiative, noting that the proposal for the D-8 Media Excellence Center was first discussed during the visit of the D-8 Secretary-General to Azerbaijan in March 2025, where it was raised in a meeting with the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. He added that the proposal was later presented at the 49th Session of the D-8 Commission in May 2025, following the circulation of an initial concept note to the Member States by the D-8 Secretariat. He emphasized Azerbaijan's intention to ensure an inclusive process by engaging all stakeholders from Member States and welcomed comments and proposals to further refine the concept.

Mr. Mammadov explained that the establishment of the Center responds to the growing importance of media in shaping regional narratives and promoting shared cultural and historical values. He stated that the Center aims to enhance media cooperation, information exchange, and the development of an interconnected and resilient media ecosystem across D-8 Member States aligning with the D-8 Roadmap 2020–2030 and the principles of unity, dialogue, and shared development.

Speaking further, Mr. Mammadov, stated that key objectives of the proposed Center include: information sharing, promotional content exchange, capacity building, media research, strategic analysis, and addressing the impacts of emerging technologies such as generative AI. He added that the center will foster collaboration between government bodies, media entities, and professionals; facilitate joint projects; establish partnerships; and serve as a hub for real-time access to verified news, research, and multimedia content. Mr. Mammadov also expressed Azerbaijan's intention to operationalize the Center within the year and welcomed further inputs from Member States to enrich the concept note.

2. The Republic of Türkiye

The representative from Türkiye expressed appreciation for the opportunity to address the meeting on the establishment of the proposed D-8 Media Excellence Center, which will be hosted by Azerbaijan. He highlighted the importance of Azerbaijan's active role and extended appreciation to the D-8 Secretariat for organizing the meeting.

He underlined the value of enhancing cooperation and solidarity among Member States in the fields of media, information, and communications, building on the Organization's strengths in other sectors such as transportation, industry, and energy. The representative noted that the expertise of Member States' institutions in the media and communications field will be vital in fulfilling the Center's objectives.

The representative of Türkiye proposed that the Center should:

- Focus on joint content production and strategic communication campaigns to raise the global visibility and influence of the Organization and its Members.
- Facilitate shared narratives on inter-member economic and commercial activities, and build a strong press expert network among Member States.
- Establish units such as:

Media and Disinformation Monitoring Unit – to track developments in social media and international press, provide accurate information to decision-makers, counter disinformation, and conduct public awareness campaigns.

The Press Coordination Unit – to build and coordinate a network of journalists, enhance the Organization’s visibility, provide training for public broadcasting institutions like TRT and Anadolu Agency of Türkiye, and prepare press materials on key global topics such as migration, terrorism, and artificial intelligence.

Events and Publications Unit – to organize symposiums, panels, and workshops, reflecting the D-8 vision where the developments in the fields of communication, media and information can be discussed and information can be exchanged.

Additionally, representative of Türkiye suggested using modern and innovative technologies, including artificial intelligence tools, for content creation, visual production, and media monitoring, ensuring that the Center becomes a hub for strategic communication and media excellence.

In conclusion, representative of Türkiye reaffirmed the readiness of the Government of Türkiye, through the Directorate of Communications, to support all activities aimed at enhancing information exchange and cooperation among D-8 Member States.

3. The Islamic Republic of Iran

The representative of Iran expressed appreciation to the Republic of Azerbaijan for its active participation in the D-8 and its willingness to host the D-8 Media Excellence Center. He reaffirmed support for any initiative that advances the Organization’s goals and strengthens cooperation among Member States. He noted that six affiliated bodies currently operate under the D-8 umbrella, namely: the D-8 Health and Social Protection Programme Office, the D-8 Chamber of Commerce and Industries, the D-8 Technology Transfer and Exchange Network, the D-8 International University, the D-8 Network of Pioneers for Research and Innovation, and the D-8 Research Center for Agriculture and Food Security.

He advised that before establishing any new institution, it is essential to assess the performance of existing bodies and evaluate the necessity of creating new ones. To prevent the uncontrolled expansion of affiliated

institutions, he recommended the development of clear modalities and regulations for the establishment of new bodies, stressing that such modalities should cover, among other elements, the justification for the new institution, alignment with the core objectives of the Organization, its structure, administrative and financial arrangements, equitable distribution of institutions among Member States, and other relevant considerations. He also proposed that the D-8 Secretariat prepare a draft of these modalities, drawing on the experiences of other international organizations, and circulate it for review by the Ad Hoc Committee on Financial and Administrative Matters.

4. D-8 Secretariat

Ambassador Mustafa Özcan noted that the circumstances surrounding the establishment of existing affiliated bodies differ from the current initiative. He acknowledged that there have been significant challenges in the creation and operation of some of the existing bodies, partly due to the absence of uniform modalities at the time of their establishment. While emphasizing that the meeting was not intended to examine those issues, he took note of Iran's views and proposals and expressed readiness to discuss the matter further at a later stage.

5. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Representative of Pakistan welcomed the initiative to establish the D-8 Media Excellence Center and expressed appreciation to the Republic of Azerbaijan for its generous offer to host and provide both institutional and financial support, for the center. She proposed that the Steering Committee of the Center should comprise representatives from each Member State's Ministry of Information, to be based in the host country of the center (Azerbaijan), while governance and decision-making processes should be collective. She suggested creating a rotational advisory board with equal representation from all Member States, to oversee policy direction and monitor outcomes.

Representative of Pakistan recommended that the Center prioritizes journalist training programmes in areas such as digital journalism, countering misinformation, and content innovation, with opportunities for Member States to nominate both participants and trainers. She also proposed developing a digital content exchange platform featuring cultural, economic, and development-related media from all D-8 countries, with content available in multiple languages including Urdu, Arabic, and English. Pakistan offered to share its expertise in media training and digital broadcasting and make its training institutes available for exchange programmes, and content development projects, coordinated through the Center.

6. The Republic of Azerbaijan

Following the interventions of Türkiye, Iran and Pakistan, the Representative of Azerbaijan shared his views on the proposed Media Excellence Center. He highlighted the importance of drawing on past institutional experiences to ensure efficiency in establishing the Center and requested esteemed Member States to provide their proposals in written form. He underlined that the objective should not only be the creation of another center but the development of a cooperative platform that strengthens the Organization's visibility and capacity.

As a new member, he noted that in his first Commission meeting, a large share of discussions was devoted to financial issues, which underscored the need for more effective and efficient organizational practices. He proposed convening informal or online meetings among Commissioners to exchange views and strengthen cooperation. He welcomed constructive contributions from all Member States and encouraged the submission of proposals through the Secretariat.

7. The Islamic Republic of Iran

The Representative of Iran noted that, to the best of his knowledge, there has not yet been a final decision on the creation of the D-8 Media Excellence Center, emphasizing that the details of its establishment remain under discussion. He referred to the 11th D-8 Summit held last December in Cairo, Egypt and Cairo Declaration, and stated that no decision was made for establishment of the center. He further stated that Iran will provide its comments to the Secretariat once the revised concept note is circulated.

8. The Republic of Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan's representative emphasized that the issue of establishing the proposed centers could not be reopened for discussion. He referred to the 49th Commission Meeting held in Istanbul last May, noting that the decision on the establishment of the centers proposed by Azerbaijan, including the D-8 Media Excellence Center and other relevant centers, had already been accepted. He observed that this matter had not been raised during the 11th Summit.

9. D-8 Secretariat

Regarding the remarks by the representative of Iran and Azerbaijan, Ambassador Mustafa Özcan provided explanations regarding the factual basis of the issue, referring to the relevant items of the 49th Commission Meeting in Istanbul, where the matter was discussed.

10. The Islamic Republic of Iran

The representative of Iran recalled the meeting report of the 49th Session of the D-8 Commission held in Istanbul last May and noted that the Commission also acknowledged the views of some Member States concerning the burden of multiple initiatives.

11. Malaysia

Representative of Malaysia appreciated Azerbaijan for the proposal to host the new affiliate bodies. She offered Malaysia's support, noting that these initiatives represent an important step toward strengthening cooperation among Member States in the respective fields.

With regard to the D-8 Media Excellence Center, representative of Malaysia emphasized the importance of establishing a clear implementation and sustainability plan to ensure the long-term success of the Center. She requested further details on the proposed governance structure and financial framework,

underscoring that such a framework would be essential to guarantee equitable participation of all Member States in decision-making and to secure the Center's sustainability.

She underlined that the proposed new bodies should have well-defined mechanisms tailored to their specific domains. For the Media Excellence Center, this would include fostering innovation and professionalism in media, while also respecting editorial sovereignty and cultural sensitivities.

Representative of Malaysia also expressed confidence that with a solid and detailed plan, collective cooperation could be significantly enhanced. She reaffirmed Malaysia's readiness to actively collaborate in the consultation process to ensure the successful establishment of the Center.

12. The Republic of Indonesia

The representative of Indonesia expressed appreciation for Azerbaijan's initiative to establish the D-8 Media Excellence Center and agreed with the substantive inputs provided by fellow Member States. She aligned with the views expressed by Malaysia and underscored the importance of developing a detailed technical procedure for the Center, particularly regarding its decision-making processes. Indonesia affirmed its readiness to collaborate with Azerbaijan, the D-8 Secretariat, and all Member States to realize the establishment of the Center.

13. Media Development Agency of Azerbaijan (Mr. Rasim Bagirov)

Mr. Rasim Bagirov, representing the Media Development Agency, expressed gratitude to all participants for their valuable ideas and contributions. He reaffirmed Azerbaijan's full support for the establishment of the D-8 Media Excellence Center. Mr. Bagirov stated that the Agency looks forward to receiving proposals and further inputs from Member States to help advance the initiative.

D. Conclusion

In his closing remarks, Ambassador Mustafa Özcan stated that the Concept Note on the establishment of the D-8 Media Excellence Center will be revised by the Republic of Azerbaijan, incorporating the comments and recommendations of the Member States. The meeting concluded with a shared understanding to continue consultations to refine the Concept Note, address technical details, and determine the necessary steps for the operationalization of the Center.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS OF VIRTUAL COORDINATION MEETING ON THE D-8 MEDIA EXCELLENCE CENTER

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