

Resolution on the negotiations on an EU-Afghanistan cooperation agreement on partnership and development

2013/2665(RSP) - 13/06/2013 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on an EU-Afghanistan cooperation agreement on partnership and development.

The resolution was tabled by ALDE, ECR, S&D, and EPP groups. It notes that the EU and Afghanistan are engaged in negotiations on a cooperation agreement on partnership and development and it calls on the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the Afghan Government to conclude them swiftly. It regrets the fact that despite the EEAS's obligation to inform Parliament concerning all stages of the negotiations, **Parliament has not been properly informed**, and it recalls its new prerogatives in foreign affairs as stipulated in the Lisbon Treaty.

Parliament stresses that the agreement should lead to a more strategic approach and to support for the Afghan authorities during and after the withdrawal of international forces. Members reaffirm that the peaceful future of Afghanistan depends on the building of a stable and economically sustainable state that is free of terrorism and narcotics and they appreciate the important contributions made by EU development cooperation and by the EUPOL Afghanistan mission, the extension of which is welcomed.

Parliament calls on the EU to **step up efforts to support the military and civilian capacity-building of the Afghan Government** and its national security forces in order to establish stability as an essential basis for socio-economic development and avoid creating a vacuum once the country assumes full responsibility for its own security after 2014, underlining the risk that the withdrawal of international forces in 2014 may create an economic vacuum. Welcoming the prospect of elections in 2014, Parliament calls for the EU to provide support, at the request of the Afghan authorities, for the **organisation of the elections**.

Parliament regrets the fact that in 2011 **opium production** rose by 61 % by comparison with 2010, accounting for 9 % of Afghanistan's GDP in 2011, noting that the EU anti-narcotics initiative has not achieved satisfactory results so far. It stresses the fact that the main focus of action against narcotics should be on supporting income alternatives for farmers requiring a broader strategy in relation to sustainable rural development and water management. The resolution recalls that Parliament has repeatedly called for the **establishment of a five-year opium elimination plan** with specific deadlines and benchmarks, to be implemented through a dedicated office with its own budget and staff and on the basis of cooperation between the EU, the US and the Russian Federation, the latter being the main victim of Afghan heroin and the world's largest opium market.

On aid effectiveness, Parliament recalls that between 2002 and the end of 2011 the EU committed a total of approximately EUR 2.5 billion in assistance to Afghanistan, including EUR 493 million in humanitarian assistance. It regrets the fact that **despite the huge injections of foreign aid the impact has been limited**, and invites the Court of Auditors to draw up a **special report on the effectiveness of EU assistance** to Afghanistan over the last decade, similar to the one on the EULEX mission in Kosovo. Members deplore the fact that a **significant proportion of European and other international aid money is lost** in the course of the distribution chain, and draws attention to the four main ways this happens: waste, excessive intermediary and security costs, overbilling and corruption.

Parliament emphasises the need for **enhanced cooperation** with Russia, Pakistan, Central Asia, India and Iran as part of a regional framework, in order to address the challenges presented by security issues, and the fight against the illegal production and trafficking of drugs.

Lastly, it calls on the Afghan Government to achieve **real empowerment of women**, strongly condemning the fact that many women are victims of violence and that prominent women in Afghan public life have been murdered, while the perpetrators have not been brought to justice.