Basic information

2009/2217(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
New strategy for Afghanistan **Subject** 6.10.05 Peace preservation, humanitarian and rescue tasks, crisis management 6.40.04.06 Relations with central Asian countries **Geographical area** Afghanistan	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
AFET Foreign Affairs	ARLACCHI Pino (S&D)	18/11/2010
	Shadow rapporteur KASOULIDES Ioannis (PPE) NEUSER Norbert (S&D) KIIL-NIELSEN Nicole (Verts/ALE) VAN ORDEN Geoffrey (ECR) MEYER Willy (GUE/NGL)	

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
DEVE Development	GOERENS Charles (ALDE)	04/02/2010

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
General Affairs	3005	2010-03-22
General Affairs	3009	2010-04-26
General Affairs	2992	2010-01-25
Foreign Affairs	3058	2010-12-13

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner

	External Relations	ASHTON Catherine

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
17/12/2009	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
25/01/2010	Debate in Council		Summary
22/03/2010	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		Summary
26/04/2010	Debate in Council		Summary
09/11/2010	Vote in committee		Summary
22/11/2010	Committee report tabled for plenary	A7-0333/2010	
13/12/2010	Debate in Council		Summary
15/12/2010	Debate in Parliament		
16/12/2010	Decision by Parliament	T7-0490/2010	Summary
16/12/2010	Results of vote in Parliament		
16/12/2010	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2009/2217(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFET/7/01583

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee opinion	DEVE	PE439.973	11/05/2010	
Committee draft report		PE440.141	13/07/2010	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE445.614	07/10/2010	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A7-0333/2010	22/11/2010	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T7-0490/2010	16/12/2010	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2011)1737	06/05/2011	

New strategy for Afghanistan

2009/2217(INI) - 13/12/2010

Following the discussion by development ministers of 9 December 2010 on the EU-Afghanistan strategy, the Council exchanged views on the political situation in Afghanistan after the elections.

It underlined the EU's commitment and the need for long-term engagement, expressing appreciation for the work of EU Special Representative Vygaudas Ušackas.

It looked at the specific areas where the EU can apply its strengths:

- justice sector,
- human and notably women's rights,
- civil service reform;
- electoral reform;
- police reform - with EUPOL Afghanistan playing an important role - as the main priorities.

New strategy for Afghanistan

2009/2217(INI) - 22/03/2010

The Council discussed developments in Afghanistan and EU efforts on the ground on the basis of the EU's 2009 Action Plan for Enhanced Engagement in Afghanistan and Pakistan in the presence of the EU's new single representative for Afghanistan, Mr Vygaudas Usackas who takes office from 1 April 2010.

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- the appointment of Mr Usackas as both the Special Representative of the EU and Head of the EU Delegation in Kabul is a further step to strengthen coordinated EU action on the ground, working in close cooperation with other international actors. EU efforts will be spearheaded under Mr Usackas' leadership. He will guide the **implementation of the Action Plan**, in close cooperation with Member States' representatives in Kabul. The Council expressed sincere appreciation to outgoing EU Special Representative, Ettore Sequi, and outgoing Head of the EU Delegation, Hansjorg Kretschmer, for their outstanding work over the past years;
- it reiterated that the internal security situation remained a direct challenge to the stability of Afghanistan. The Council underlined its continued support for international civilian efforts in Afghanistan, emphasising the central coordination role of UNAMA and reaffirming its support for the UN mandate and the objectives of ISAF. The key to delivering the civilian efforts will be enhanced coordination and the development of a coherent approach between all major civilian actors, notably the EU Special Representative, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General and the NATO Senior Civilian Representative, under the leadership of the Government of Afghanistan. The Council underlined the **importance of Afghan ownership and leadership**;
- it emphasised its support for the outcomes of the **London Conference of 28 January 2010** and reiterated that all efforts must now focus on implementing the commitments made there, including with regards to the announced Peace and Reintegration Trust Fund to finance the Afghan-led Peace and Reintegration Programme. The Council underlined the significance of balanced, Afghan-led reconciliation and reintegration processes as key elements of a sustainable political solution in Afghanistan. In this respect, it welcomed the organisation of a Peace Jirga, scheduled to take place this Spring. It also welcomed recent contacts between leaders in the region aimed at confidence building. It looks forward to a second successful ad hoc Summit between the EU and Pakistan on 21 April 2010;
- the Council discussed the **Kabul Conference**, which should follow up the commitments made in London. The Kabul Conference will provide an opportunity for the Afghan Government to chart the way forward, notably on anti-corruption, reinforced security, effective and impartial governance, economic and social development, human rights and improved electoral processes. The EU expects that the Government of Afghanistan will act swiftly and decisively to deliver on the promises made to its people. Through its Action Plan, the EU in cooperation with UNAMA and other international partners, continues to provide long-term assistance to Afghanistan in institution building and civilian capacity programmes, including at sub-national level. The Council expects to discuss a first report on the progress of implementation of the Action Plan next month;
- the Council stressed the importance of credible, inclusive and secure **parliamentary elections in Afghanistan** reflecting the will of the people. Recalling the recommendations of the EU Election Observation Mission to the Presidential Elections of 2009 and the commitments made at the London Conference to ensure the integrity of the elections, the Council urged the Government of Afghanistan to proceed without further delay with reforms to the electoral process to safeguard the impartiality, independence and integrity of the electoral institutions, notably the Independent Election Commission and the Electoral Complaints Commission, in close cooperation with the SRSG of the UN. The Council emphasised that only structural reforms will make any support extended to the electoral process by the international community fully effective. The Council will continue to follow closely preparations for the upcoming parliamentary elections.

New strategy for Afghanistan

2009/2217(INI) - 26/04/2010

The Council, in a joint session of foreign and defence ministers, discussed the way forward on the **implementation of the EU Action Plan for Enhanced Engagement in Afghanistan and Pakistan** and took note of the first six-monthly implementation report.

They were joined by the Secretary-General of NATO, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, for an informal discussion on military and civilian cooperation on and prospects for further EU - NATO cooperation in Afghanistan.

New strategy for Afghanistan

2009/2217(INI) - 16/12/2010 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on a new strategy for Afghanistan.

It believes that the EU strategy for Afghanistan should have to take as its starting point **two premises**:

1. an acknowledgement of the continuing deterioration in security and socio-economic indicators in Afghanistan despite almost a decade of international involvement and investment; and
2. the need to further encourage the shift in the mindset of the international community so that in future its plans and decisions are shaped in close cooperation with the Afghans.

Parliament stresses that any long-term solution to the Afghan crisis has to start from the resolution of the problems relating to internal security, civil protection and economic and social development. Members are aware of the set of factors hampering progress in Afghanistan but has chosen to focus on four main areas where, it believes, efforts expended could result in improvements: international aid and coordination; the implications of the peace process; the impact of police training; and the elimination of opium cultivation through alternative development. Parliament reiterates that the EU and its Member States should support Afghanistan in the reconstruction of its own state, with stronger democratic institutions capable of ensuring national sovereignty, security based on a democratically accountable army and police, a competent and independent judiciary, state unity, territorial integrity, equality between men and women, media freedom, an emphasis on education and health, sustainable economic development and the prosperity of the people of Afghanistan, and respect for the historical, religious, spiritual and cultural traditions and rights of all communities on Afghan territory.

To create a dynamic in Afghanistan, Parliament supports the idea of a **special long-term flagship programme** focusing on priorities identified by the Afghans themselves. It stresses the need to ensure a **sustainable improvement in women's lives** by ensuring they can enjoy full fundamental, political, civil and social rights, protection against the fundamentalists and any other discriminatory practices. There is also a need to increase the level of funding and political and technical support for policies to improve the situation of Afghan women.

On the **political level**, the resolution notes that the **parliamentary elections on 18 September 2010** were marred by fraud and violence and that many Afghans have been prevented from exercising their fundamental right to vote. Parliament also deplores the irregularities in the country's judicial processes and the continued existence of the death penalty.

As regards the four main areas, Parliament outlines the following:

1) International aid – use and abuse: the resolution recalls that the combined EU (European Community and Member States) budget for aid to Afghanistan for the period 2002-2010 totalled around EUR 8 billion. However, despite the huge injections of foreign aid, the situation in Afghanistan continues to be discouraging and, since 2004, the number of people living below the poverty threshold has increased by 130%.

It acknowledges the widespread perception that Afghan Government corruption is solely responsible for the lack of provision of essential services to citizens, but also notes that the majority of resources for socio-economic development have been channelled through international organisations (regional development banks, NGOs, etc). Parliament condemns the fact that a significant proportion of European and other international aid money is lost along the distribution chain and draws attention to the four main ways in which this happens: waste, excessive intermediary and security costs, overbilling and corruption.

Measures such as the following need to be taken:

- strengthening of the transparency and accountability of financial assistance granted to the Afghan government, to local and international NGOs;
- humanitarian aid to be distributed on a geographically more homogenous basis, in the light of an analysis of needs and in keeping with the requirement for urgency;
- combating of corruption since it is an obstacle in terms of access to basic public services, such as health and education, and represents a huge impediment to the country's socio-economic development (only USD 6 billion (or 15%) out of a total of USD 40 billion in aid actually reached the Afghan Government between 2002 and 2009, and that, of the remaining USD 34 billion, which was channelled through international organisations, regional development banks, NGOs, international contractors, etc., between 70% and 80% never reached the intended beneficiaries). Parliament notes the decision taken at the Kabul Conference that 50% of the international aid should be channelled through the Afghan national budget by 2012, in accordance with Afghanistan's request;
- strengthening of the coordination between donor countries and provide for detailed evaluations of European and international aid;
- setting up a centralised database on, and to analyse the costs and impact of, all EU aid to Afghanistan;

- pruning drastically the operating expenses of humanitarian and development bodies active in Afghanistan whereby the EU in allocating funds to concrete projects implemented in real and balanced partnership with Afghan institutions.

Overall, Parliament calls for **aid to Afghanistan to be dispatched directly to the population in Afghanistan immediately affected**. In this regard, impartial humanitarian bodies should be responsible for the distribution of aid in the country and military personnel should be involved only in entirely exceptional circumstances.

Contrary to the committee responsible's opinion, Plenary reject the idea that the deployment of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in reconstruction and/or development-aid activities is inappropriate.

Parliament draws attention to the huge cost of the war prosecuted in Afghanistan between 2001 and 2009, estimated at over USD 300 billion and equivalent to more than 20 times Afghanistan's GDP. It also notes that the decision to place the US military supply chain in private hands without any reliable criteria for assuring accountability, transparency and legality is fuelling extortion and corruption, as warlords, local mafia bosses and ultimately Taliban commanders end up taking a significant share of the USD 2.2-3 billion business of military logistics in Afghanistan.

2) The peace process: recalling the absolute necessity for good governance in Afghanistan, Parliament calls for fundamental judicial reform in the country. It considers that that much of the blame for the present stalemate in Afghanistan rests with **early miscalculations** made prior to the new counter-insurgency strategy **by coalition forces** who foresaw a speedy military victory over the Taliban and an easy transition to a stable country run by a legitimate government with strong Western backing. It believes that the **presence of the Taliban was underestimated** and the ability of the Karzai government to provide governance overestimated, and that, as a result, little attention was paid to the task of rebuilding and developing the country. In this context, they call for new measures to be taken which may be summarised as follows:

- promote a transition using an approach that is more civil and less military;
- favour a **political approach involving negotiations with the Taliban** and other combatant groups, as well as other political players in the country who are ready to participate in a government of national unity capable of putting an end to the war;
- banish from the country Al-Qaeda and its promotion of international terrorism, as well as any other terrorist group;
- action to eliminate poppy cultivation.

Parliament notes the complexity of the conflict and the key role Pakistan plays in this context. Plenary also notes the involvement of the Pakistan Intelligence Service (ISI) aimed at making sure that Pakistan, too, gets a satisfactory outcome from any peace dividend. Parliament stresses, however, that for peace to be allowed to take root in Afghanistan political deals among key regional powers, including India, Pakistan, Iran and the Central Asian States, Russia, China and Turkey will be required, and a common position of non-interference and support for an independent Afghanistan. It also calls for normalisation of the relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan, namely through a final settlement on the issue of the international border between the two countries.

In parallel, Members call for a much more active EU role in the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan. In an oral amendment adopted in plenary, Parliament urges the EU and its Member States to work together with the United States to channel more of the international aid effort through domestic authorities and the Kabul Government, and to ensure that drones, special forces and local militias against Taliban leaders are used according to General Petraeus' orders for zero tolerance on the loss of innocent civilians' lives.

Plenary pays tribute to the servicemen and women of all the Allied Forces who have lost their lives in defending freedom, and expresses its condolences to their families, as well as to the families of all innocent Afghan victims.

Members recall that the US has stated that it will start to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan in summer 2011, other countries have either already withdrawn or are making plans to do so, and others still have not indicated an intention to withdraw; whereas, however, the withdrawal of the military has to be a gradual and coordinated process in the framework of a political project that guarantees a smooth transition of responsibility to the Afghan security forces.

3) Police and the rule of law: Parliament stresses that Afghanistan must be provided with an efficient police force and an autonomous army capable of ensuring security so as to permit a subsequent withdrawal of the foreign military presence from the country. It recognises, however, that having self-sustaining security forces is a somewhat long-term goal. There is a particular need for a more coordinated and integrated approach in the training of police, as well as, separately, the training of army officers, and for closer coordination of their work in order to avoid unnecessary duplication. Several measures are proposed:

- a comprehensive reform of the Interior Ministry;
- strengthening of the mandate of EUPOL;
- more coherent and sustainable training of the police by focussing in particular on literacy programmes for recruits;
- an immediate end to police training by private contractors;
- the introduction of a large-scale police training programme launched by EUPOL and NATO/ISAF;
- increase significantly the number of police trainers on the ground so that the objective of the London Conference to reach 134 000 trained Afghan police officers by the end of 2011 becomes a realistic scenario, and, in this context, merge Member States' bilateral police training missions with that of EUPOL;
- give **preference to recruits** with a basic standard of literacy **who are not drug users** and are better qualified psychologically and physically than the present cohort.

The resolution stresses that police training cannot deliver without a properly functioning judiciary. It is, therefore, necessary to provide increased financial and technical support to strengthen the judicial system, including an increase in the salary of judges at all levels and the putting in place, in coordination with the UN, of a **specialised mission to train judges,** as well as public officials in the Afghan Ministry of Justice and the penal system.

4) Narcotics: Parliament points out that **Afghanistan is the source of 90% of the world's illicit opium**, and yet that when coalition forces entered Kabul, in 2001, no opium poppies were being grown in Afghanistan owing to the UN's success in achieving a ban on their cultivation. As a result of the impunity given to growers and traffickers, within two years, cultivation reached pre-2001 levels. According to Members, a large, well-resourced military force should, subsequently, have found it easy to sustain this opium-free situation through local agricultural development projects, protected by its troops against the Taliban and local warlords. Members note, however, that opium production is still a key social, economic and security issue, and calls on the EU to consider this as a **strategic priority** in its policies towards Afghanistan.

They also point out that more than 90% of heroin in Europe originates from Afghanistan and that the cost to public health in European countries runs into billions of dollars. They emphasise that the challenges posed by the drug economy in Afghanistan must be tackled not only nationally but internationally by addressing all links in the drug chain and that this requires, in particular:

- assistance to farmers to reduce supply;
- drug prevention and treatment to curb demand;
- law enforcement against the intermediaries;
- massive investment in the establishment of a comprehensive agricultural and rural policy to offer opium producers a credible, lasting alternative;
- targeted measures to reduce the number of drug addicts in Afghanistan itself.

Members point out that, in 2009 trade in narcotics totalled USD 3.4 billion and the potential gross export value of opium was 26% of Afghanistan's GDP. They indicate that the Taliban net only 4% of the profits from the annual narcotics trade, and local farmers 21%, with 75% going to government officials, the police, local and regional brokers, and traffickers. It notes, in short, that **NATO's Afghan allies are in fact getting the lion's share of the profits from the drugs trade**.

Parliament recalls that, between 2001 and 2009, the US and the international community spent USD 1.61 billion on counter-narcotics measures without having any significant impact on production and trafficking. It points out that, unless the dependence of the Afghan economy on drugs is ended once and for all and a viable alternative economic growth model found, the goals of restoring security and stability to the region will not be achieved. It calls for other sources of viable revenue to be made available to the 3.4 million Afghans who make their living from opium poppy cultivation, such as saffron or pomegranates, which deliver a much higher income than opium poppies. Members consider that, as in Pakistan, Laos and Thailand, a similar process ofphasing out opium poppy cultivation could be envisaged for Afghanistan at a cost of EUR 100 million per year by specifically earmarking 10% of the EU's annual aid to the country for a period of five years. They call for a **five-year national plan for the elimination of illicit opium crops**, promoted through cooperation between the EU and the Russian Federation, the latter being the major victim of Afghan heroin.

The resolution highlights that some poppy eradication in Afghanistan has been carried out using chemical herbicides, and this practice results in serious harm to people and to the environment in terms of soil and water pollution. However, there is now a consensus on the need to concentrate repressive measures on the drug trade and heroin-producing labs, and not on farmers.

To conclude, Parliament calls on the Council and the Commission to incorporate this proposed strategy fully into their existing strategies and to take the proposal fully into account within their own national plans and to take full account of all the budgetary implications of the proposals contained in this resolution.

New strategy for Afghanistan

2009/2217(INI) - 25/01/2010

The Foreign Affairs Council, chaired by the High Representative, Catherine Ashton, led a discussion on the situation in Afghanistan ahead of the London Conference on Afghanistan on 28 January 2010. At this conference the international community is expected to renew its commitment to Afghanistan following the presidential election earlier in the year.

The High Representative emphasised the EU's solidarity with its international partners in the drive to focus attention on efforts to help the Afghan government take greater responsibility for making the country secure. The Union is enhancing its engagement under an Action Plan adopted last October.

In addition, the EU Police Mission in Afghanistan will continue to contribute to the long-term sustainability of police reform in Afghanistan.