Basic information

2013/2168(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Pakistan's regional role and political relations with the EU **Subject** 6.40.08 Relations with Asian countries **Geographical area** Pakistan	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
AFET Foreign Affairs	ZALA Boris (S&D)	17/06/2013
	Shadow rapporteur GAHLER Michael (PPE) NEYTS-UYTTEBROECK Annemie (ALDE) TANNOCK Timothy Charles Ayrton (ECR)	

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
DEVE Development	ZAHRADIL Jan (ECR)	09/10/2013

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
European External Action Service	ASHTON Catherine

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
12/09/2013	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
11/02/2014	Vote in committee		
17/02/2014	Committee report tabled for plenary	A7-0117/2014	Summary
12/03/2014	Decision by Parliament	T7-0208/2014	Summary

12/03/2014	Results of vote in Parliament		
12/03/2014	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2013/2168(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/7/13700

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE524.635	03/12/2013	
Committee opinion	DEVE	PE521.550	04/12/2013	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE526.271	09/01/2014	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A7-0117/2014	17/02/2014	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T7-0208/2014	12/03/2014	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2014)457	11/08/2014	

Pakistan's regional role and political relations with the EU

2013/2168(INI) - 17/02/2014 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted the own-initiative report by Boris ZALA (S&D, SK) on Pakistan’s regional role and political relations with the EU.

Members noted that Pakistan’s strategic role in the region, its relationship to its neighbours and EU-Pakistan relations are of major and growing importance to the EU.

Although parliamentary elections in March 2013 marked the first transfer of power from one elected civilian government to another in the modern history of Pakistan, the country’s political and economic progress is hampered by **pervasive internal and regional security problems** (extremism, sectarian strife, suicide and targeted killings).

Members highlighted that Pakistan is one of the largest recipients of EU development and humanitarian assistance and the EU is Pakistan’s largest export market. The EU and Pakistan have recently chosen to deepen and broaden their bilateral ties, as exemplified by the 2012 EU-Pakistan five-year engagement plan and the first EU-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue. Moreover, as from 1 January 2014, Pakistan is now integrated into the EU’s special generalised scheme of trade preferences (GSP+).

The report stated that building a sustainable democracy and a pluralistic society – as well as achieving greater social justice, eradicating deep poverty and malnutrition in parts of the country, raising the basic education level and preparing the country for the effects of climate change – will entail deep and difficult reforms of Pakistan's political and socio-economic order, which remains characterised by feudalistic structures of land ownership and political allegiances and imbalances in priorities between military spending on the one hand and welfare provision, education and economic development on the other, and a dysfunctional revenue collection system that systematically undercuts the state's capacity to deliver public goods.

Members considered that that elected civilian governments, endowed with democratic legitimacy, devolution of power to the provinces and effective local government are the best means of containing the tide of violence and extremism, restoring state authority in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), and ensuring Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

As regards **drone attacks**, the report noted that the Pakistani Government has clearly expressed its opposition to US drone strikes on its territory. It welcomed the UN General Assembly resolution which calls for further clarification of the legal framework applicable for the use of armed drones.

Members, on the other hand, are concerned by reports that Pakistan is considering **exporting nuclear weapons to third countries**. They called on Pakistan, as a nuclear weapon state, to legally ban exports of all nuclear weapons-related material or know-how and to actively contribute to international non-proliferation efforts.

The report stressed that **EU-Pakistan relations need to grow deeper and more comprehensive** by developing political dialogue, thereby maintaining a relationship of mutual interest amongst equal partners. Members considered that Pakistan's democratic transition has engendered an opportunity for the EU to follow a more explicitly political approach in bilateral relations and provision of assistance.

The EEAS and the Commission are urged to pursue a nuanced and multi-dimensional policy towards Pakistan that synergises all the relevant instruments at the EU's disposal, such as political dialogue, security cooperation, trade and assistance, in line with the EU's comprehensive approach to external action and with a view to preparations for the next EU-Pakistan summit. They should also ensure that EU policy towards Pakistan is **contextualised and embedded in a broader strategy for the region**, thereby reinforcing EU interests across South and Central Asia.

Members remained deeply concerned about the quality of **education** and, in a related manner, the alarming situation of **women** in many parts of Pakistan. They called for concrete and visible measures to enforce women's fundamental rights in the society, including the enactment of legislation against domestic violence, steps to improve the investigation and prosecution of honour killings and acid attacks, and a revision of the legislation that facilitates impunity; points to the need to ensure better access to education, better integration of women in the labour market and better maternal healthcare.

Lastly, they also reiterated their concern that Pakistan's blasphemy laws – which can carry the death sentence and are often used to justify censorship, criminalisation, persecution and, in certain cases, the murder of members of political and religious minorities – are open to a misuse that affects people of all faiths in Pakistan. The Pakistani government should implement a moratorium on the use of these laws. Pakistan should also intensify its efforts to preserve **freedom of religion and belief**, including by moving towards abolition of the death penalty.

Pakistan's regional role and political relations with the EU

2013/2168(INI) - 12/03/2014 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 457 votes to 26 with 65 abstentions, a resolution on Pakistan's regional role and political relations with the EU.

Parliament noted that Pakistan's strategic role in the region, its relationship to its neighbours and EU-Pakistan relations were of major and growing importance to the EU.

Although parliamentary elections in March 2013 marked the first transfer of power from one elected civilian government to another in the modern history of Pakistan, the country's political and economic progress was hampered by **pervasive internal and regional security problems** (extremism, sectarian strife, suicide and targeted killings).

Parliament recalled that that Pakistan was one of the largest recipients of EU development and humanitarian assistance and the EU was Pakistan's largest export market. The EU and Pakistan had recently chosen to deepen and broaden their bilateral ties, as exemplified by the 2012 EU-Pakistan five-year engagement plan and the first EU-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue. Moreover, as from 1 January 2014, Pakistan was integrated into the EU's special generalised scheme of trade preferences (GSP+).

Governance: Parliament stated that building a sustainable democracy and a pluralistic society – as well as achieving greater social justice, eradicating deep poverty and malnutrition in parts of the country, raising the basic education level and preparing the country for the effects of climate change – would entail deep and difficult reforms of Pakistan's political and socio-economic order. The latter remained characterised by:

- feudalistic structures of land ownership and political allegiances;
- imbalances in priorities between military spending on the one hand and welfare provision, education and economic development on the other;
- a dysfunctional revenue collection system that systematically undercut the state's capacity to deliver public goods.

Parliament considered that that elected civilian governments, endowed with democratic legitimacy, devolution of power to the provinces and effective local government were the best means of containing the tide of violence and extremism, restoring state authority in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), and ensuring Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Governance: Parliament reiterated that good governance, accountable and inclusive institutions, separation of powers and respect for fundamental rights were important elements to address the nexus of development and security in Pakistan.

Security issues: Parliament called on the Pakistani Government to fulfil its security obligations and responsibilities by further engaging in the fight against extremism, terrorism and radicalisation, with the implementation of strict and uncompromising security measures and law enforcement, as well as by addressing inequality and socio-economic issues likely to fuel the radicalisation of Pakistani youth.

As regards **drone attacks**, Parliament noted that the Pakistani Government had clearly expressed its opposition to US drone strikes on its territory. It welcomed the UN General Assembly resolution which called for further clarification of the legal framework applicable for the use of armed drones.

On the other hand, Parliament was concerned by reports that Pakistan were considering **exporting nuclear weapons to third countries**. It called on Pakistan, as a nuclear weapon state, to legally ban exports of all nuclear weapons-related material or know-how and to actively contribute to international non-proliferation efforts.

It considered that the signing and ratification of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) by Pakistan – as well as India – would demonstrate a strong commitment to peaceful regional co-existence and enormously contribute to the security of the whole region.

Pakistan-EU relations: Parliament stressed that **EU-Pakistan relations needed to grow deeper and more comprehensive** by developing political dialogue, thereby maintaining a relationship of mutual interest amongst equal partners. Members considered that Pakistan's democratic transition had engendered an opportunity for the EU to follow a more explicitly political approach in bilateral relations and provision of assistance. EU support to Pakistan should prioritise the consolidation of democratic institutions at all levels.

The EEAS and the Commission were urged to pursue a nuanced and multi-dimensional policy towards Pakistan that synergised all the relevant instruments at the EU's disposal, such as political dialogue, security cooperation, trade and assistance, in line with the EU's comprehensive approach to external action and with a view to preparations for the next EU-Pakistan summit. They should also ensure that EU policy towards Pakistan was **contextualised and embedded in a broader strategy for the region**, thereby reinforcing EU interests across South and Central Asia.

Discrimination against women: Parliament remained deeply concerned about the quality of **education** and, in a related manner, the alarming situation of **women** in many parts of Pakistan. They called for concrete and visible measures to enforce women's fundamental rights in the society, including the enactment of legislation against domestic violence, steps to improve the investigation and prosecution of honour killings and acid attacks, and a revision of the legislation that facilitates impunity. Parliament pointed to the need to ensure better access to education, better integration of women in the labour market and better maternal healthcare.

Parliament also reiterated concern that Pakistan's blasphemy laws – which could carry the death sentence and are often used to justify censorship, criminalisation, persecution and, in certain cases, the murder of members of political and religious minorities – were open to a misuse that affects people of all faiths in Pakistan. The Pakistani government should implement a moratorium on the use of these laws. Pakistan should also intensify its efforts to preserve **freedom of religion and belief**, including by moving towards abolition of the death penalty.

Lastly, the resolution condemned all attacks on Christians and other religious minorities living in Pakistan.