

# Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on current political developments in Afghanistan and the prospects for peace

The European Union considers today's conclusion of the Afghanistan-U.S. Joint Statement for Peace and the settlement between the U.S and the Taliban as important first steps towards a comprehensive peace process, with intra-Afghan negotiations at its core. The current opportunity to move towards peace should not be missed. The European Union expects these Afghan-owned and Afghan-led negotiations to start without delay in an inclusive manner and aiming at a lasting peace that could create an environment of security and stability for all Afghans. The continuation of a reduction in violence and its expansion into a ceasefire constitute a necessary condition for trust between the negotiating parties.

The European Union stands ready to facilitate and support the peace process with the aim of preserving and building upon the political, economic and social achievements of the people of Afghanistan since 2001, which should be irreversible. The conflict needs a political solution in which human rights, including women's rights, are respected and common grievances are addressed. The European Union stresses the importance of an inclusive peace process with all political factions, where notably Afghan women and minorities as well as the civil society, are represented in a meaningful manner. Respect for the constitutional order and rule of law is paramount during the process.

In this crucial time, unity is essential to master the challenging tasks ahead and for the long-term future of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The European Union calls upon all actors to unite forces for the coming period. It is vital that all people of Afghanistan feel represented in the next government and in peace negotiations. This would help address grievances, including in the context of the recent electoral process, and promote reconciliation. The EU calls on all stakeholders to put the interests of the nation above all other considerations, as the collective responsibility of all Afghan political forces.