

Proposal for a new EU strategy on Afghanistan: in support of peace and prosperity

In recent years, Afghanistan has been confronted with a number of challenges that threaten the progress made in its economic and social development and its democratic institutions. The European Union recognises that the delicate security situation and the fragile economic situation the country is facing, combined with a clear determination on the part of the Afghan authorities to implement much-needed reforms necessitates renewed attention from the international community. Today, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European Commission have set out their vision for how the European Union can support Afghanistan both to address its challenges and to bring about positive change for the Afghan people.

The Joint Communication on elements for an EU strategy on Afghanistan is available [online](#).

Federica **Mogherini**, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, said: *"The Afghan people deserve peace and prosperity. As the European Union, we have been standing by them and will continue to do so, in support of the reform process, of Afghanistan's democratic path, of the rule of law and human rights, and of bringing peace to the country, to the benefit not only of all Afghans but also of the entire region and the international community as a whole. This work towards peace needs to be led by Afghans and owned by Afghans, but the active support of the region and of the international community is crucial. The Afghan people can count on the European Union to accompany this process."*

Neven **Mimica**, the Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, said: *"Afghanistan is not alone. We will continue the support which we have been providing since 2002 – to make sure that the development achievements of the last years are not lost. With the EU's support, more Afghan women are actively participating in the country's politics. Access to health care has increased, and farmers are better supported to improve agricultural production than before. Moving forward to help Afghanistan overcome its many challenges, we will renew our engagement and focus on supporting good governance and the justice sector, creating sustainable growth and jobs, and ensuring basic social services for the Afghan people."*

The Joint Communication sets out ways in which the European Union can work, in close cooperation with civil society, the Afghan authorities, and all stakeholders, towards lasting peace, a consolidated democracy, equitable development and social justice in Afghanistan. It proposes concrete actions, focussing on five priority areas:

Peace, stability and regional security:

- Supporting and promoting an inclusive, **Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation process** leading to a negotiated peace settlement
- Building the capacity of the Afghan government to reach out to all those in **sincere negotiations on peace and reconciliation**.
- Supporting the civilian aspects of **security sector reform**, including the professionalisation of the police and the fight against corruption in this area.
- Working with the government of Afghanistan to support its **strategic policy priorities**, including peacebuilding and sustainable development.

Democracy, rule of law and human rights:

- Assisting Afghanistan's efforts to **reform its electoral system and to strengthen the integrity of the electoral process**, for example by supporting independent electoral bodies or assisting in drafting of electoral legislation and regulations.
- Helping to **fight corruption**, as well as supporting the country's justice sector, parliament and civil society.
- Working with the Government of Afghanistan to **address human rights concerns**, including respect for minorities, child protection or the fight against impunity.

Economic and human development:

- Providing **technical cooperation** to assist the Afghan authorities to implement the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, and their own National Peace and Development Framework.
- Reinforcing the role of **rural economies and agriculture**, an increased role of the **private sector** and enhancing **resilience**.
- Supporting **regional connectivity**, to further improve the country's transit, transport and energy corridors and to enable increased trade throughout the region.

Migration:

- Working together to fully implement the *EU-Afghanistan Joint Way Forward on migration issues* and the bilateral memoranda of understanding concluded between EU Member States and Afghanistan.
- Helping to **address the root causes** of irregular migration and forced displacement.
- Helping to create an environment that offers the Afghan people an **alternative to irregular migration**, as well as to enable the **sustainable reintegration** of returnees from the EU and non-EU countries through a community-based approach.

Empowering Women:

- Supporting the implementation of the national action plan for UNSC resolution 1325 on **women, peace and security**, and other national women's empowerment legislation.
- Supporting the incorporation of legislation and additional measures to **prevent, combat and criminalise violence against women** and sexual

harassment.

- Strengthening **the role and rights of women** in preventing and resolving conflicts, in democratic participation, and in sustainable development.

The Joint Communication is the latest illustration of the European Union's strong engagement in and strong commitment to Afghanistan. Notably, it follows the [Brussels Conference on Afghanistan](#), held in October 2016 in Brussels, the signing of a new [EU-Afghanistan Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development](#) in February 2017, and the appointment of a [Special Envoy to Afghanistan](#) in June.

The actions proposed in the Joint Communication will be discussed with the EU Member States and the European Parliament in the coming weeks, and will contribute to a **new EU Strategy on Afghanistan**, to be finalised soon afterwards.

Further Information

[Joint Communication](#): Elements for an EU Strategy on Afghanistan

[Factsheet](#): EU-Afghanistan relations

[Website](#): Delegation of the European Union to Afghanistan

[Website](#): International Cooperation and Development – Afghanistan

[Press Release](#): European Union strengthens engagement with Afghanistan through the appointment of a Special Envoy

[Press Release](#): Brussels Conference on Afghanistan: realising Afghanistan's economic potential and reinforcing the role of women

[Press Release](#): Brussels Conference on Afghanistan: continued international support for Afghanistan's political and economic stability and development