



22.11.2018

# OPINION

of the Committee on Development

for the Committee on Foreign Affairs

on the draft Council decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the Union, of the Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, of the other part  
(2015/0302M(NLE))

Rapporteur for opinion: Frank Engel

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## SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Development calls on the Committee on Foreign Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Notes that Afghanistan is one of the world's largest recipients of development aid and that EU institutions committed EUR 3.6 billion in aid to the country between 2002 and 2016; regrets the fact that the proportion of Afghans living in poverty has risen from 38 % (2012) to 55 % (2017) and highlights the fact that the country has registered slow growth since 2014 with the drawdown of international security forces, accompanying reductions in international grants, and a deteriorating security situation;
2. Recognises that this recent reversal in development progress is largely due to the intensification of long-lasting violence and conflict; highlights that 2018 is on track to be the deadliest year for civilians on record and deplores the spate of attacks and killings in the run-up to the October 2018 parliamentary elections, which claimed the lives of many civilians and ten of the candidates standing for election; underlines the fact that internal displacement, the arrival of returnees from the surrounding region – including 500 000 undocumented Afghans since the start of the year following a crackdown in Iran – and from EU Member States, as well as climate factors, such as an ongoing drought, have all led to a deterioration of the humanitarian situation; notes with concern that reintegration activities, funded through the EU's development aid, are difficult to execute owing to the country's current humanitarian and security situation;
3. Underlines the fact that according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 5.5 million people are in need of humanitarian aid in Afghanistan, including internally displaced people following conflict or drought, and emphasises that drought has led to the forced displacement of more than 250 000 people in the north and west of the country; notes that the Humanitarian Response Plan is only 33.5 % funded and urges the EU and its Member States, therefore, to step up all their endeavours to address key humanitarian challenges and human needs and to pay particular attention to vulnerable people, including those located in areas that are hard to reach;
4. Stresses the need to comprehensively address humanitarian, development and security challenges, including through longer-term systemic actions, and to better operationalise the nexuses between them; insists that pacifying the country, eradicating poverty, and supporting the fight against the Taliban, normalising the functioning of the state and its institutions, and expanding basic social services such as healthcare and education are indispensable prerequisites for social and economic development in Afghanistan;
5. Welcomes the 2016 Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF) and the Self-Reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework (SMAF) adopted by the Afghan Government; calls for the EU and its Member States to continue supporting, through the Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development (CAPD), Afghan-owned development priorities in line with development effectiveness principles;
6. Recalls the EU's commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and in particular to eradicating poverty, by focusing its efforts in areas in which it adds most

value, and by respecting the principles of aid efficiency and effectiveness and of policy coherence for development (PCD); stresses the need to continue funding needs-based development aid for Afghanistan and to focus on eradicating poverty and hunger in particular, addressing vulnerabilities such as widespread food insecurity and chronic malnutrition, and managing water; emphasises the need to remain committed to supporting the government to increase access for all to basic services, such as education and healthcare, with a focus on ensuring healthcare for vulnerable people including women, girls and children, as well as addressing disability and mental healthcare; emphasises the importance of ensuring that civil society organisations (CSOs) can play an essential role in exercising the social control that is needed for verifying good provision of public services;

7. Welcomes the reference to the development of sustainable and environmentally friendly agriculture in the CAPD, as rural economies and agriculture currently constitute the main source of employment generation; calls for the EU to scale up its interventions in this area in order to improve food and nutrition security, rural livelihoods and employment, including the sustainable management of natural resources; emphasises that particular attention should be devoted to the impact of natural hazards and climate change on small subsistence farmers;
8. Welcomes the very prominent position accorded to gender equality and related policies in the Agreement, and its strong focus on civil society development; calls for the EU to further promote equality between women and men, and women's empowerment, through its development efforts, bearing in mind that changing societal attitudes towards the socio-economic role of women call for corresponding measures in awareness raising, education and the reform of the regulatory framework;
9. Welcomes the Afghan national return management strategy, but points to the need for continuous monitoring for the purposes of implementing safeguards for the reintegration of Afghan citizens, especially children, who must be guaranteed access to primary and secondary education; regrets the fact that in spite of Article 28(4) of the CAPD, which states that the Parties should conclude a readmission agreement, no formal agreement has been achieved, but an informal one – the Joint Way Forward; deems it important that any agreements regarding readmission should be formalised to ensure democratic accountability; regrets the lack of parliamentary oversight and democratic control on the conclusion of the Joint Way Forward and stresses the importance of conducting continuous dialogue with the relevant actors in order to find a sustainable solution on the regional dimension of the issue of Afghan refugees;
10. Emphasises that EU development assistance to Afghanistan should not be seen exclusively through the prism of migration and the objectives of border management, and considers that development aid should address the root causes of migration effectively;
11. Welcomes the EU-Afghanistan State Building Contract (SBC) (budget support), signed in 2016, as it can strengthen government institutions and their ownership of development policies; notes that the SBC draws on an overall positive review of the progress made by Afghanistan on key reform areas; stresses that resources must be used effectively and be systematically monitored to prevent misuses; calls on the

Commission to keep Parliament regularly informed of the SBC's implementation and emphasises that such findings should be used to prepare the continuation of the budget support operation for the period 2018-2021.

## PROCEDURE – COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>Title</b>	Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development between the EU and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
<b>References</b>	2015/0302M(NLE)
<b>Committee responsible</b>	AFET
<b>Rapporteur</b> Date appointed	Frank Engel 23.5.2018
<b>Discussed in committee</b>	9.10.2018
<b>Date adopted</b>	20.11.2018
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 14 –: 0 0: 3
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Mireille D'Ornano, Enrique Guerrero Salom, Teresa Jiménez-Becerril Barrio, Stelios Kouloglou, Arne Lietz, Linda McAvan, Maurice Ponga, Cristian Dan Preda, Lola Sánchez Caldentey, Elly Schlein, Eleni Theocharous, Joachim Zeller, Željana Zovko
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Thierry Cornillet, Stefan Gehroid, Bernd Lucke, Adam Szejnfeld

## FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

14	+
ALDE	Thierry Cornillet
ECR	Bernd Lucke
EFDD	Mireille D'Ornano
PPE	Stefan Gehrold, Teresa Jiménez-Becerril Barrio, Maurice Ponga, Cristian Dan Preda, Adam Szejnfeld, Joachim Zeller, Željana Zovko
S&D	Enrique Guerrero Salom, Arne Lietz, Linda McAvan, Elly Schlein

0	-

3	0
ECR	Eleni Theoharous
GUE/NGL	Stelios Kouloglou, Lola Sánchez Caldentey

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention