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EU ENGAGEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN

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The European Union has a longstanding commitment to Afghanistan and its government. It is a key donor, with Member States and the European Commission together committing around EUR 600 million for the period 2011-2013. The EU, working with international partners, plays a major role in the stabilisation and reconstruction efforts. The EU has deployed a police mission (EUPOL Afghanistan) under the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). Detailed information about this mission is provided in a separate fact-sheet.

The EU is a leading donor to Afghanistan with a concrete political and operational presence

➤ EU assistance to Afghanistan

The EU and its Member States combined have committed some EUR 8 billion in aid to Afghanistan for the period 2002-2010. For the 2011-2013 period, the EU (not including Member States) has pledged around EUR 200 million a year for Afghanistan, some 20% of total EU assistance to Afghanistan (EU and Member States).

➤ A political partnership

The EU's partnership with Afghanistan is highlighted in a joint political declaration signed on 16 November 2005 and is based on priorities such as the establishment of strong and accountable institutions, security and justice sector reform, counter-narcotics, development and reconstruction.

The 2009 EU Action Plan for Afghanistan and Pakistan, drawn up to enhance EU engagement in the region, has become a pillar of the work programme of the EU Delegation in Kabul. A fourth implementation report will be presented to the EU Foreign Affairs Council in November 2011-reiterating the need to further strengthen a common European approach on both political matters and development cooperation.

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The EU Council of Ministers has approved a mandate to negotiate an ambitious and balanced Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development with Afghanistan, thus sending a strong signal of its long-term commitment to Afghanistan's development.

➤ **A long term presence in Afghanistan**

The European Union has been present in Afghanistan since the mid 1980s, with a European Commission support office in Kabul followed by the opening of an ECHO office in 1993. Both offices had moved to, and operated over the border from Peshawar, during the Taliban period. In December 2001, the Council appointed an EU Special Representative (EUSR) and at the same time a decision to set up a Delegation of the European Commission to Afghanistan was taken. The office was fully established the following year.

Since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty (January 2011), there has been a single EU Delegation, combining the offices of EU Special Representative and the former EC Delegation. This setting gives the EU an authoritative representation and voice to promote a consolidated EU approach when interacting with the Government on political as well as development assistance issues.

The EUSR and Head of the EU Delegation, Vygaudas Usackas, is in close contact with key stakeholders in the Afghan political process and with international partners. He advises the EU on its Afghanistan policy and on the implementation of its priorities for action. The EU Delegation in Kabul plays an important role in intra-EU donor coordination through frequent meetings of Heads of Missions and regular meetings of Development Counsellors.

The EU is a key partner in the reconstruction and stabilisation effort

Working with international partners, the EU is making a major contribution to Afghanistan's reconstruction and stabilisation. In agreement with the Afghan government and the donor community, the EU and its Member States play key co-ordination roles in crucial areas of assistance, including security-related areas.

➤ **Reconstruction aid**

The current Country Strategy Paper sets out the priorities for the EU's work in Afghanistan for the 2007–13 period. For the period 2011-13 the total budget for EU development cooperation is €600 million.

Of the total of €600 million in development assistance, the percentage allocation per sector is as follows:

Sector	% of total funding 2011-13
Rural development	35-40%
Governance and Rule of Law	35-40%
Health and Social Protection	18-21%
Support for regional cooperation	2-4%

A significant part of this funding has been channelled through the national programmes of the Afghan government or through the multi-donor trust funds that contribute to the central budget of the government. Apart from bilateral cooperation, Afghanistan also benefits from regional programmes for Asia, in particular Aid for Uprooted People programmes, as well as support within the thematic programmes such as for Food Security, Non-State Actors, the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights and the Instrument for Stability. Humanitarian assistance (governed by principles and rules largely different from development cooperation) is provided by ECHO. The EU is an important donor to humanitarian assistance and transitional activities implemented by UN organisations and NGOs providing support for protection of displaced persons, return and reintegration of refugees, response to food crises and mine action.

➤ Security

Twenty-five EU Member States (including non-NATO members) are deploying approximately 33,441 troops to the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), ie 26% of the total ISAF troops.

➤ Police and the Rule of law

Since 2002, the EU and a number of Member States have been actively involved in the rule-of-law sector. In 2007, the EU Police Mission in Afghanistan Mission (EUPOL Afghanistan) was launched to contribute to the establishment of sustainable and effective policing arrangements that will ensure appropriate interaction with the wider criminal justice system under Afghan ownership. It consists mainly of police, law enforcement and justice experts deployed in Kabul and at regional and provincial level. The mission monitors, mentors, advises and trains primarily the Afghan Ministry of Interior and Afghan National Police as well as staff at the Attorney General's Office and others (see factsheet on EUPOL Afghanistan).

The EU continues to be the single largest contributor to the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan which pays for the running costs of the Afghan National Police. The EU has provided some EUR 272 million to the Trust Fund to date. Further EUR 140 million support is planned for commitment in 2011, including a significant component on civilian policing capacity building. The EU has since 2008 been supporting the National Justice Programme, with the aim of strengthening the centralised state justice system and increasing access to justice for the Afghan people. The EU also contributes to the remuneration of uniformed prison personnel at the Central Prisons Department via LOTFA. A further commitment of EUR 20 million is foreseen in 2011 via the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF).

➤ *Public Administration reform*

The EU is preparing to commit EUR 40 million in 2011 in support of the ARTF *Capacity Building for Results Programme*. This programme aims to draw the Government and international community together around a coordinated, five-year response to Public Administration Reform needs.

➤ *Counter-narcotics*

The EU has played an active role in supporting counter-narcotics efforts from the outset of the reconstruction process, not least because 90 per cent of the heroin in Western Europe originates in Afghanistan and also because the growth in corruption and crime associated with the burgeoning opium economy poses a grave threat to the success of the entire reconstruction and stabilisation process.

Counter-narcotics is central to all EU programmes in Afghanistan. These activities include rural development programmes; lessening the dependence of rural economies on poppy cultivation; rule of law programmes; building up the interdiction capacity of the Afghan law enforcement agencies; and, finally, preventing the flow of drugs and precursors in and out of the country through establishing better border management systems. As such, the whole supply chain of the narcotics industry is being addressed through a range of EU programmes.

➤ *Health & Social Protection*

The EU has contributed significantly to improving access to basic primary health care (from >10% in 2002 to 80% in 2010) and to the sharp reduction of the under 5 mortality rate (a 26% reduction over 2002-2010). Since 2001, the EU has channelled over EUR 216 million into the health sector in support of health policy & administration management, infectious disease control, basic health care, nutrition. An additional EUR105 million is planned for commitment in 2012 to ensure the continuation of this support.

Social Protection of highly vulnerable groups - children, women and people with disabilities - is another focus of the EU support in Afghanistan. With EUR 25 million commitments in 2012, this support is expected to amount to EUR 49 million (EUR 24 million in 2008).

➤ *Elections*

The international community supported the 2009 and 2010 elections through a basket funding mechanism entitled Enhanced Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow (ELECT) managed by UNDP, to which the EU in total contributed €33 million. A follow up project, ELECT II, has been designed to support the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and its activities in the inter-election period. The ELECT II project will allow IEC to consolidate progress, build institutional, technical and operational capacity, undertake voter registration and inform the electoral reform agenda ahead of the 2014-15 elections.

The EU plans to provide an initial €10 million from its Instrument for Stability (IfS) for funding for the electoral authorities and domestic observers in the inter-election period, and plans to take part as a major donor in the ELECT II basket fund. Initiatives are also underway to assure EU support for future elections with DCI funding under the post-2014 CPS/MIP, in line with the election cycle approach.

For more information go to:

EU Police Mission in Afghanistan (EUPOL Afghanistan): www.consilium.europa.eu/eupol-afghanistan

EU-Afghanistan website: eeas.europa.eu/afghanistan

EU-Afghanistan humanitarian aid website: www.ec.europa.eu/echo/aid/asia/afghanistan

EU-Asia Relations: www.consilium.europa.eu/third countries/asia