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# F A C T S H E E T

## EU support to promoting Afghan women leaders

Women in Afghanistan have made real and substantive gains. Women's life expectancy has increased; maternal mortality rates have significantly decreased; 4 million girls are in school; and women are taking up roles as police officers, judges and governors. But the fundamental shift in the status of women is still in the early stage. It will need continued support and advocacy. At a basic level, it includes the need to eliminate violence against women. This includes a high number of cases of murder, torture, sexual abuse and gang rape, child marriage and the selling of women. Impunity of the perpetrators of these crimes remains a critical issue. The need and scope for further improvement is emphasised by statistics that show adult literacy is only 17 % for women compared to 45 % for men; only 8 % of judges, 6 % of prosecutors and fewer than 20 % of lawyers are women, compounded by only 1 % of the Afghan National Police being women.

The EU has long championed gender equality in Afghanistan. On 8 March, HRVP announced a number of new initiatives to specifically focused on offering training opportunities to Afghan women.

### 1. EU training opportunities for Afghan women

The EU will offer a number of new possibilities for Afghan women officials, in response to specific requests, to increase their leadership skills through:

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- specialised management courses on public administration for up to 20 women officials at a European training institute;
- exchanges for Afghan women officials in EU institutions based on a Memorandum of Understanding between the Afghan and European services involved;
- EU support to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and security, which includes specific training opportunities for Civil Society representatives and women officials to design and accompany implementing measures;
- internship and traineeship programmes in EU institutions, notably through applications for the Blue Book Traineeship;
- specific short-term visits of Afghan women officials to EU Member States (TAIEX/Partnership Instrument);
- specific short-term visits of Afghan women officials to EU Institutions (EU Visitors Programme).

## **2. EU support to Afghan women in conflict prevention**

*The EU will launch a Call for Proposals (€2.3m) for civil society to enhance the role of Afghan women in conflict prevention and peace building in line with UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in Afghanistan, as soon as the Afghan National Action Plan (NAP) 1325 is published. . It will include projects such as training of civil servants of the Government of Afghanistan and CSOs' staff involved in all aspects of the NAP including: implementation, publication, annual evaluations, public outreach campaigns – among other innovative measures, could be considered.*

## **3. Gender focus in development financing**

The EU supports various projects gender focus projects (total of about EUR 18.2 million). Examples include:

- *Health:* delivering health services to women and girls is particularly challenging due to gender related issues. Their freedom of movement is limited, the prevailing gender attitude often exclude women. The EU continues its efforts to improve the access of women to health, with a focus on the capacity building of female health professionals and the quality of the health and nutrition services.
- *Rule of Law:* The EU is one of the main contributors to the Law and Order Trust Fund Afghanistan (LOTFA) providing training and capacity-building activities specifically directed at female police officers. 10 million EUR was dedicated in 2014 to support the Female Police Strategy. In the last two years, the EU's police mission, EUPOL Afghanistan, has provided specific training to more than 650 women police officers. In addition, EUPOL has worked on improving access to justice through enhancing the legal aid system, with a specific emphasis on improving women's access to justice.
- *Justice:* The EU provides EUR 20 million in support to the Afghanistan Justice Service Delivery Project (JSDP). The JSDP aims at increasing access to and use of legal services and improve justice service delivery. The project indirectly benefits women as participants in trainings for prosecutors, judges, court managers and legal aid providers as well as ultimate beneficiaries of improved justice delivery.

- *Social Protection for Women*: five specific programmes (EUR 7 million in ongoing activities) were developed to improve the quality of life of marginalised women and children in Afghanistan. This includes the training of psychosocial counsellors and the establishment of two mobile legal aid and psychosocial counselling clinics.

#### **4. Civil society**

*The EU supports civil society's work* on women's rights and gender based violence. In 2015-2016, the EU plans to award EUR 4.7 million to civil society organisations (financed under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights and under the Civil Society Local Actors budget line). Future actions will focus on human rights monitoring and reporting, capacity building of the media, including investigative journalism, the promotion of women's political, civil empowerment and rights, and on strengthening the accountability role of civil society.

#### **5. Policy dialogue**

The EU has a regular political and policy dialogue with the government of Afghanistan on gender. Widespread traditional customs which discriminate against women and the fight against impunity are key concerns when supporting the implementation of the Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW) law and the National Action Plan for Women (NAPWA).

The EU provides 20% of the planned Multiannual Indicative Programme (€1.4 bill until 2020) as incentive payments based on the achievement of agreed mutual commitments. The implementation of key women's rights conventions, such as the Law on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, are cornerstones of this process.