



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Strengthening EU Action in Afghanistan and Pakistan

*2971st EXTERNAL RELATIONS Council meeting
Luxembourg, 27 October 2009*

Council conclusions

"A. Elections in Afghanistan

1. The Council acknowledges the importance of democratic elections in Afghanistan and welcomes the decision of the Independent Election Commission (IEC) to hold a second round in the presidential elections. The EU deeply regrets the irregularities and fraud that took place during the first round and notes with satisfaction that the safeguards of the electoral system worked. The European Union commends in particular the Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC) for its work in ensuring credible elections. Ahead of the second round the EU reiterates the need for credible, inclusive and secure elections. The EU will redeploy its EOM to observe the second round of the presidential elections. The process to this point shows how far Afghanistan has come since 2001, but also the imperative need to review the electoral standards and improve their implementation. The EU is ready to assist the Afghan government in this endeavour.
2. Following the successful completion of a second round, the EU stands ready to engage actively with the new government. The new government needs urgently to adopt an agenda for meeting the challenges that lay ahead. Such an agenda should serve as a contract between the government and the people of Afghanistan, and be supported by a renewed compact with the international community, with clear priorities and measurable benchmarks. A forthcoming conference, possibly in Kabul, could pave the way for this.

P R E S S

B. Situation in Pakistan

3. The Council acknowledges the ongoing efforts of the government of Pakistan to re-establish full control over South Waziristan, as an important step in countering instability, terrorism and cross-border insurgency. The EU urges Pakistan to meet its obligations to protect the civilian population. The EU stands ready to assist all civilians affected by fighting in accordance with basic humanitarian principles and provided proper access can be granted and needs assessed. The EU is concerned about the security situation in Pakistan and regrets that hundreds of innocent civilians have become victims of indiscriminate attacks aimed at destabilising the Pakistani state. The EU is firm in its support of the government of Pakistan and encourages it to adopt a comprehensive strategy to fight terrorism and address its root causes.

C. EU action plan for Afghanistan and Pakistan

4. In June 2009, the Council invited the SG/HR and the Commission to set out concrete recommendations, policy priorities and a strategy for EU engagement in Afghanistan and Pakistan. It also invited Member States to contribute with the aim of enhancing and consolidating the EU's action in Afghanistan and Pakistan.
5. By adopting the attached Plan for strengthened EU action in Afghanistan and Pakistan the Council declares the EU's renewed readiness to assist in meeting the challenges of the region, in cooperation with the countries concerned and our international partners.
6. To achieve a step change in Afghanistan is a formidable challenge. It first and foremost requires responsive and effective leadership from the Government of Afghanistan. It also requires concerted and strategic international action. Political and civilian efforts need to go hand in hand with security measures and the developments on the ground. The conflict in Afghanistan cannot be solved without addressing the complex situation in Pakistan. The Government of Pakistan has an important role to play as a neighbour and friend of Afghanistan. Regional integration and economic cooperation must be developed while borders must be better managed and the cross-border flow of insurgents, drugs, weapons and illegal goods stopped. The situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan has a direct impact on Europe. Many of the most serious global threats facing us today are present in the region.

Afghanistan

7. The Council stresses that in Afghanistan the EU will concentrate its efforts on strengthening state capacity and institutions to promote good governance, human rights and efficient public administration, especially at the sub-national level. In addition, the Council will focus on strengthening the rule of law, i.a. by assisting in the building of a civilian police force through EUPOL and also supporting the implementation of the National Justice Programme, and supporting economic growth, especially through rural development and social progress. These efforts are also in line with the strategic priorities presented by the Government of Afghanistan. The Council emphasises that international assistance must be a transition strategy, focusing on enabling the Afghan government to assume full responsibility, while the international community gradually takes a more supportive role.

Pakistan

8. The Council reiterates its intention to strengthen the EU's emerging strategic relationship with Pakistan, including by holding a second *ad hoc* summit in the first half of 2010. It welcomes the steps taken by the democratically elected Government of Pakistan to meet the country's complex challenges and calls upon the government to swiftly begin reconstruction and development in the north-western part of the country, in accordance with the Malakand Development Strategy. In order to support Pakistan's economic development, the EU has agreed to step up a dedicated dialogue in order to significantly enhance the bilateral trade relationship, including through a possible free trade agreement in the long term.
9. A stable, democratic and prosperous Pakistan is also key to addressing global issues such as counter-terrorism, non-proliferation, counter-narcotics and human rights. The EU aims to improve cooperation with Pakistan in multilateral forums to enhance progress on these issues. The EU stands ready to assume a supportive role in Pakistani-led initiatives to reform its security sector, strengthen the rule of law and democratic institutions, including the electoral system, thus encouraging the Government to produce concrete results. In this respect, the EU and Pakistan will swiftly establish a regular counter-terrorism dialogue and cooperation to enhance counter-terrorism capacity.

Implementation

10. The Council emphasises that the Plan for strengthened EU action in Afghanistan and Pakistan must be implemented without delay. It will have to be a common endeavour between the EU institutions and the Member States. To this end the Council invites:
 - the SG/HR, the Commission and Member States to develop jointly a comprehensive implementation scheme, including proposals for financing, to be presented during 2009;
 - the SG/HR and the Commission, in consultations with the Presidency, to propose, before the end of this year, the modalities for implementing the Council Conclusions on working towards a single EU representation in Kabul, double-hatting the roles of the EUSR and EC Head of Delegation;
 - the SG/HR and the Commission, based on input from the Member States, to report to the Council on the status of implementation of the Plan for strengthened EU action in Afghanistan and Pakistan by April 2010 and thereafter at least every six months."

EU Action plan for Afghanistan and Pakistan

1. Turning the page in Afghanistan and Pakistan is a formidable challenge. It can only be done through concerted national, regional and international action. It will take a responsive and responsible Afghan Government. It also requires a regional approach. The conflict in Afghanistan cannot be solved without addressing the complex problems in Pakistan. Pakistan must be part of the solution. Furthermore, Pakistan is facing very serious challenges of its own. A stable and democratic Pakistan is strategically important to the region's future development. Any international approach must acknowledge the evident differences between Pakistan and Afghanistan but must equally encompass the need for complementarities and coherence between the two.
2. The international community has made a huge commitment in Afghanistan and is stepping up its efforts in Pakistan. We want to promote a secure, stable and prosperous future for the people of both countries. The European Security Strategy of 2003 explicitly acknowledges that the European Union has security interests beyond its immediate neighbourhood. Many of the most serious global threats facing us today can be found in Afghanistan and Pakistan: terrorism and militant extremism, illegal drugs, trans-national crime and weapons of mass destruction. Instability and insecurity there have a direct impact here in Europe.
3. The situation in Afghanistan is deteriorating. We are not only faced with a critical security situation. Progress on political reform, governance and state-building is too slow, and in some parts of the country almost non-existent. In the absence of good governance, access to basic services, adequate justice and rule of law, the combined international and Afghan security efforts will not produce the necessary political stability needed for a secure and prosperous development.
4. Afghanistan is now entering a decisive period. Much is at stake. The formation of a new Government in Kabul provides an opportunity to frame a new agenda and a contract with the Afghan people. That agenda should be supported by a renewed compact between the Government of Afghanistan and the international community. This requires above all strong Afghan leadership, as well as enhanced and better coordinated and concerted international support. Political and civilian efforts must go hand in hand with security measures and developments on the ground.
5. The European Union stands ready to assist in meeting these challenges. This is why we have decided to adopt a plan for strengthened action in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Our ideas build on past commitments made, in Bonn, London, Rome, Paris and The Hague. Attention must now be focused on the Afghan state taking full responsibility, with the international community gradually assuming a more supportive role. The Afghan people need to see their own authorities deliver tangible improvements to their lives. This alone will give them reason to have real faith in their Government and in the future of their country.
6. Such a "transition strategy" does not equal exit. The EU's commitments are long term. The European Union and its Member States are already today spending close to € 1 billion a year on various civilian, political and developmental activities in Afghanistan, in addition to our countries' large contributions to the security effort through ISAF.

7. The EU will thus reinforce its efforts in strengthening Afghan capacity and will work with and through the Afghan Government to foster effective and accountable state institutions, especially for governance at sub-national level, and efficient public administration. The 2009 elections show the imperative need to review and improve the election system before the elections in 2010. The EU will assist in these endeavours. The EU will further enhance its emphasis on the rule of law and governance in Afghanistan, on fighting corruption and improving the human rights situation, especially for women and girls. The EU is committed to assisting the Afghan Government in the political challenge of reintegration and reconciliation. Leading combatants away from the path of violence requires providing them with alternative aspirations and livelihoods.
8. The EU is committed to strengthening its partnership with Pakistan. The EU and its Member States today provide more than € 300 million a year in economic support and development. With Pakistan, the EU will further develop the strategic relationship that is emerging after the successful ad hoc Summit of June 2009. In partnership with the Pakistani Government, the EU will support the strengthening of democratic institutions and the rule of law, as well as economic development and trade. The EU welcomes the increased responsibility Pakistan is taking for its own security notably in the Malakand Division. We expect that the same approach will be followed against all forms of terrorism. Long-term efforts must be made to counter the influence of extremism. We must also assist in responding to the needs of the population, especially in the affected areas. The EU will promote a continued political and strategic dialogue between the Pakistani Government and the Friends of Democratic Pakistan.
9. Pakistan also plays a key role in regional economic integration. Initiatives such as the Afghanistan-Pakistan Trade and Transit Agreement deserve the EU's full support. Sustainable development in the long run will depend on both countries being able to trade normally with each other and the wider region. The EU therefore stands ready to promote regional economic cooperation, including the facilitation of regional transport links, and development.
10. A lot has been achieved, both in Afghanistan and Pakistan, by the countries themselves and by the international community. However, given the global interests at stake, it is far from enough. This strengthened EU action builds on existing policies as defined by the EU, by the Afghan and Pakistani Governments and by the wider international community. But strategies alone will not suffice. Now, more than ever, implementation and action are required.

REGIONAL ISSUES

1. Enhanced regional cooperation

1. The EU will directly support the capacity for cooperation of the existing regional organisations in South- and Central Asia (RECCA, SAARC, ECO, CAREC) and offer cooperation to strengthen regional economic cooperation in particular. The EU will help build Afghan and Pakistani institutional capacity to engage in regional cooperation. In this respect, EU funding for the establishment of a RECCA secretariat in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kabul will be considered.

2. To ensure progress on trade and transit, the EU stands ready to fund confidence-building measures, including initiatives to improve transport infrastructure and connectivity in the region. The EU will actively support the Afghanistan-Pakistan Trade and Transit Agreement, which can serve as a model for the region. The EU will also facilitate infrastructure investments by Development Banks and other financial institutions.
3. The EU will continue to pursue cooperation initiatives in combating organised crime, in particular counter-narcotics, strongly supporting UNODC activities in the region. It continues to offer technical assistance to the countries of the region and it will provide support to Afghanistan and its neighbours in using the coordination mechanisms between customs and border management authorities agreed at the RECCA to reinforce their action against criminal organisations.
4. The EU will actively engage in strengthening counter-terrorism cooperation in a range of areas, including fostering regional law enforcement and judicial cooperation.
5. The EU will build on existing activities in the field of border management in the region, such as in the context of the G8 and the OSCE, especially with the Central Asian nations. The EU will offer Afghanistan and Pakistan and their neighbours enhanced technical assistance and expertise in the field of integrated border management. The EU stands ready to support a coordination system between authorities responsible for customs and border management
6. The EU stands ready to support schemes that may be agreed between the Governments of Afghanistan, Pakistan and other countries in the region, to promote improved migration management, to fight illegal migration, including the signing of readmission agreements, and to enhance the synergies between migration and development.
7. In line with its strategy on disaster risk reduction in developing countries, the EU will support all efforts to integrate disaster risk reduction initiatives in Afghanistan and Pakistan and at regional level.
8. In the field of education, in particular higher education and technical and vocational education and training, the EU will support a strategic re-focusing to “South-South” educational cooperation. The EU will work to establish direct links to educational capacities in the region and to cross-border institutions.

2. Improved EU coordination as part of international coordination

9. The EU will support the Governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan in their leadership role in improving coordination, especially of aid. To this end, the EU will also continue to support the UN and its activities in coordinating the efforts of the international community. The EU calls on the International Financial Institutions to play a more prominent role in the overall efforts of the international community.
10. Both in Afghanistan and in Pakistan, the EU will work together and coordinate closely with international partners, most notably the US, which plays a dominant role in terms of presence, assistance and political dialogue.

11. The EU supports an increased dialogue between Afghanistan and Pakistan and regional stakeholders: India, China, Russia, Iran, Turkey, Central Asian nations, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries, including the SCO. A comprehensive exchange on these issues should be a recurrent part of bilateral dialogues with and between regional stakeholders.
12. The EU intends to enhance the alignment of existing instruments with policy priorities. In this respect, the horizontal/cross pillar aspects of engagement with both countries will be duly reflected.

AFGHANISTAN

1. Insecurity in Afghanistan cannot be addressed by military means alone. Creating a framework for stability by developing effective state institutions, improving governance, the rule of law and human rights, and fighting corruption is equally important. To this end it, will take a responsive and responsible Afghan government. The EU commitment must be long term and predictable, supporting Afghanistan in becoming an effective and accountable state that becomes progressively more capable of managing its own security and of delivering services to its people. Ultimately, the only durable solution will be political, Afghan-led and based on the trust of the Afghan people.

1. Strengthening Afghan capacity and ownership

A renewed compact

2. A set of political commitments will have to be adopted by the new Afghan Government as a contract with its people, and supported by a renewed compact between the international community and Afghanistan, recommitting and strengthening the objectives set out in the original document of 2006 and in the Afghan National Development Strategy. Through this renewed compact, the Afghan Government will be reassured of the long term commitment of the EU and the wider international community. The compact needs to set out clear priorities, and realistic benchmarks for measuring progress and reinvigorated review mechanisms. This should serve as the framework for a dialogue with the new Afghan Government, and for a much needed debate with international actors on the goals, ways and means of engagement. The international conference, preferably organised in Kabul, could serve this process. The EU intends to be at the forefront of such initiatives and to support the Government of Afghanistan's lead role, assisted by UNAMA.

Sub-national governance

3. Weak local government structures in Afghanistan constitute a major obstacle to development. This is an area where the EU has a wealth of experience and can add great value. The Independent Directorate on Local Governance (IDLG) remains one of the main Afghan interlocutors through which the EU channels its dialogue and activities while working to ensure that it is truly independent and transparent. New initiatives should also aim to utilize the community-based structures established under the National Solidarity Programme (NSP), to which a number of EU Member States and the Commission contribute.
4. There is a need to develop and institutionalize capacity building, through Afghan authorities such as the Independent Administrative Reform Civil Service Commission and the Sub-National Governance Task Force, to ensure coordination and alignment with the ANDS.

5. The EU will look at new ways of supporting IDLG at sub-national level. To further enhance engagement the EU will consider:
6. Giving financial and technical support to the UNDP-led Afghan Sub-National Governance Programme (ASGP) and to priority programmes identified by the IDLG and the Afghan Government generally.
7. Facilitating UNAMA's roll-out to the provinces, notably through additional secondments.
8. Working with the Afghan Government for concrete steps towards budget reform, particularly the introduction of resource allocation models. This would be a step towards developing a sustainable recurrent fiscal budget.
9. Strengthening the Sub-National Governance Task Force by providing technical expertise and adequate funding, and encouraging the Afghan Government to install sub-groups within the Task Force to work on specific issues.
10. Facilitating a dialogue with the Government, local authorities, UNAMA and other donors, especially the US, on how to raise and spend revenue locally. This process should start by launching pilot projects, ideally located in areas covered by a Member State PRT.

A plan for national capacity building

11. Building capable and accountable institutions and Afghan capacity remain central to the EU's approach in Afghanistan. The EU will assist the Government of Afghanistan to create the conditions that will allow for increasing the proportion of EU assistance from both the Commission and Member States that is channelled through Afghan institutions, and will engage actively in persuading and supporting other key donors, most notably the US, to do the same. The EU, with UN and other international actors will work with the Government to establish a plan to step up the pace and quality of Afghan-led capacity building, including:
 12. Strengthening civil service capacity - working with Afghan institutions to institutionalise better across-the-board-capacity in Ministries. This will include training of civil servants in core skills such as budgeting, planning and other management skills as well as supporting public administration studies at the Civil Service Institute, Afghan universities or other training facilities. Such facilities may already exist or may need to be established. Support to capacity building at the sub-national level will form an integral part of this process.
 13. EU support to capacity building – in cooperation with the Government of Afghanistan and other partners, the EU will undertake a review of the Government's current capacity building needs, aligning the EU's future support on the basis of the outcome of this review. In preparation, the EU will consolidate data on the EC's and Member States' current involvement in management and vocational training.
 14. Raising the impact of EU expertise – the EU will aim to build a network of available experts, based on Member State databases, who can be deployed at short notice to Afghanistan. Using personnel from one database in other European programmes should be possible, thereby affording a larger pool of expertise that can be brought to bear.

Strengthening the electoral framework and democratic institutions

15. The EU will remain at the forefront of the election process, thoroughly reviewing the performance of the electoral system during 2009 elections and assisting in implementing the improvements needed before the elections in 2010. In this respect, the EU will:
16. Institute a lessons learned process with the Government and UNAMA drawing on the recommendations of the 2009 Electoral Observation Mission and earlier EU support to the electoral cycle in 2004/05.
17. Give priority to supporting a strengthened framework for democratic development with a stronger and more pluralistic political party system and a better functioning Parliament. This will be done by supporting EU Parliament activities and the work of European political foundations.
18. On the above basis, support the 2010 elections, including working with the Afghan Government to clarify the roles of district councils in the Sub-National Governance Programme, and give strong political support for action on vetting administration appointments and candidates and for an impartial election commission that reflects the composition of parliament.

Reintegration

19. The EU will support Afghan-led reintegration measures. The EU will explore ways of supporting the effectiveness of reintegration with instruments from DDR processes, such as vocational training, civilian employment and rural support schemes aimed at keeping re-integrated persons in civilian endeavours. In this context, the EU will consider supporting Afghan led structures and mechanisms for inclusion of elements of the insurgency, for example, by looking into ways of supporting the Afghan Government in setting up a joint multi-donor trust fund.

2. Strengthening the Rule of Law

Anti-corruption

20. The new compact should include clear and targeted action in fighting corruption. The EU is committed to supporting institution and capacity building and has a strong focus on government accountability towards the Afghan people, e.g. by supporting the Government of Afghanistan to improve legal and institutional frameworks and by supporting civil society and media endeavours in anti-corruption advocacy. Corruption can also be countered by aligning funding behind key initiatives such as the UN-led Afghan Sub-national Governance Programme (ASGP) and the UNDP Accountability and Transparency (ACT) project.

Counter-narcotics

21. The EU supports Afghanistan's efforts to reduce the illegal cultivation and production of narcotic substances, through its law enforcement, public health and rural development programmes. The EU supports the National Drug Control Strategy and will maintain the counter-narcotics dialogue with Afghanistan.

Policing

22. EUPOL's focus on civilian policing is extremely important in the Afghan context. A civilian police force is integral to building any functioning rule of law. The EU will put emphasis on streamlining its efforts, giving priority to enhancing coordination between EUPOL and Member States' bilateral programmes. The EU will:
 23. Ensure swift deployment of the remaining EUPOL staff. New solutions aimed at increasing staffing numbers are being pursued, for example through the contracting of officers funded under the CFSP budget and through improvement of the existing incentives structure for seconded staff.
 24. Support EUPOL in expanding its role in the provinces and regional specific training that builds on US and other nations' Focused District Development training. EUPOL is currently assessing the logistical and security provisions it requires to do this. The EU will also assess the possibility of establishing a funding mechanism to support EUPOL activities, notably as regards provincial training centres projects.
 25. Reinforce the recent strengthening of the wider rule of law aspect of EUPOL through further operational planning and staffing of the mission, especially in the provinces. The positive effects and lessons learned working within the ministries and Kabul city structures should be transferred to the provincial level.
 26. Further strengthen its efforts in the police sector by increasing its political and financial engagement in the work within the IPCB in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior. The EU will work to ensure maximum coordination with initiatives taking place within the framework of the NATO Training Mission in Afghanistan, including the forthcoming Gendarmerie Initiative (EGF).

27. The Commission's substantial support to the Law and Order Trust Fund Afghanistan (LOTFA), which pays for the running costs of the Afghan National Police, should continue. The support to LOTFA serves as one of the EU's main tools for leveraging the necessary reforms in the police. However, there will also be increased efforts to set in train the means for the budget of the Afghan Police to become fiscally sustainable in the long run.

The justice sector

28. The EU is playing a key role in reforming the justice sector, with the European Commission having taken the lead following the 2007 Rome Conference. However progress on reforms in the justice sector has been slow to date. The EU will continue to give priority to an agreement with the new Afghan Government on clear and realistic targets for progress in the justice sector, especially in a more efficient implementation of the National Justice Programme (NJP). In this respect the EU will continue to channel funding through the Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund/Justice (ARTF/Justice).
29. The EU also focuses its attention on:
30. Additional, coordinated assistance and political support to bodies that reinforce constitutional checks and balances, and the establishment of a formal justice system, including by encouraging the establishment of an impartial body to oversee the Constitutional Law.
31. Legislative reforms required to build a more efficient and effective justice system
32. Providing training and professional development for judges and prosecutors in the framework of the Independent National Legal Training Centre.

Human rights

33. Human rights, in particular women's and children's' rights, are at the centre of a strengthened EU political dialogue with the Afghan Government. The EU encourages the latter to take concrete action towards full respect of these rights. In addition, public opinion within Member States is increasingly sensitive to reports of human rights abuses in Afghanistan, as illustrated by the controversy over the "Shia Law". The EU Human Rights strategy in Afghanistan will be fully implemented. The implementation of the concrete recommendations made during Afghanistan's 2009 Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review provides real opportunities to achieve progress on human rights.
34. The EU and its Member States will provide strong support and capacity building for Afghan civil society. Civil society will be supported to ensure it is more strategic and coordinated in its approach, focused on engaging with Parliament, and that it is better placed to lobby the Afghan Government on democracy and human rights.

3. Promoting growth through agriculture and rural development

35. Responding to rural dwellers' needs is a critical part of meeting the political and development aspirations of the Afghan people at large. Eighty percent of Afghans live and work in rural areas, and agriculture and rural development remain one of the key entry points in improving livelihoods, eradicating poverty and stimulating economic recovery but also in building local level governance. The EU will thus remain focussed on supporting this sector. To further deepen its engagement, the EU will support the Government of Afghanistan to move towards establishing comprehensive sector-wide policies and programmes, including development of alternative livelihoods.
36. Some Member States are already supporting specific programmes and agencies, namely the Ministries of Agriculture and Rural Rehabilitation and Development. That said, the EU should move away from individual project support and channel its efforts through the national Agriculture Development Framework which provides an overarching plan for development in the sector.
37. In this respect, the National Solidarity Programme (NSP) and the Comprehensive Agriculture and Rural Development Facility (CARD) are good examples of national programmes which should receive EU support. Rural micro-credit schemes aimed at enabling the Afghan private sector to become the engine for agricultural growth and job creation are also worthy of support.
38. Boosting trade is an important aspect for agricultural development: Afghanistan is already a recipient of the EU's "Everything But Arms" trade provisions, directed at the world's poorest countries. The EU will also provide technical assistance to help further improve the standards of Afghan produce for export.

4. Enhancing the effectiveness of the EU presence and activities in Afghanistan

Alignment and coordination at the European level

39. In order to better align and coordinate Community and Member States' efforts the EU will work towards one single EU representation in Kabul, "double-hatting" the roles of the EUSR and the Head of the European Commission Delegation. A process to further identify concrete ways of improving policy coordination and synergies within priority sectors, starting with governance, capacity building and the rule of law, will be initiated shortly in Kabul. The exercise will be led by the Presidency, EUSR and EC Head of Delegation and will feed into the EU's participation in drawing up the next compact with the new Afghan Government.

Coordination at the international level

40. The EU will take steps to strengthen the role and effectiveness of the Government of Afghanistan as the main avenue for donor coordination, supported by UNAMA. The EU will take steps to enhance its own internal alignment and coordination and its ability to "speak with one voice" in donor coordination mechanisms, thereby making the Government's coordination role easier.

41. Where appropriate and feasible, the EU should strive to direct as much of its assistance as possible through Afghan Government channels, or through multi-donor trust funds which directly support the Afghan Government. Efforts should also be made to continue to increase the capacity of the Afghan Government so that it is better placed to manage such direct donor support to its central budget. Other non-EU donors, especially the US, should be invited to follow a similar path.
42. The EU will also put emphasis on ensuring that continued European and international efforts in the area of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) are adequately coordinated with the ANDS and the Afghan Government's national programmes. In this respect the EU will actively consider continuing its direct support to the activities of EU PRTs as regards civilian assistance in the provinces.

5. Humanitarian assistance

43. The EU will continue to provide humanitarian assistance to returnees, internally displaced persons, communities affected by insecurity and other vulnerable groups, including those affected by natural disasters. The EU underlines the need to ensure full respect for international humanitarian law in a situation where humanitarian space is increasingly shrinking. Similarly the EU will support the overall coordinating role of OCHA for humanitarian aid in Afghanistan.

PAKISTAN

1. The EU's overriding interest is a stable democratic Pakistan. Pakistan is facing immediate challenges in several parts of its territory which need to be addressed urgently in the short and medium term, in areas such as humanitarian aid and reconstruction, but also security sector reform, social services and governance. The EU supports Pakistan in its quest to fight all extremist groups on Pakistani territory. The election of a new democratic government offers a unique opportunity to support the strengthening of democratic institutions in Pakistan, governance and respect for human rights and to build a stronger and more ambitious partnership between the EU and Pakistan. The Joint Communiqué following the ad hoc EU-Pakistan Summit of 17 June 2009 presents a comprehensive agenda for mutual action.

1. Support for the Malakand Development Strategy

2. The EU will provide support to further implementation of the Comprehensive Stabilisation and Socio-Economic Development Strategy for Malakand, as formally presented by the Government of Pakistan to the Friends of Democratic Pakistan, notably in providing support to security sector reform and the rule of law, depending on the Post-Crisis Needs Assessment.
3. The EU and its Member States will identify resources which can in the longer term be used to fully implement the plan. At the same time, the EU will continue to respond to the humanitarian crisis in Pakistan which is likely to continue well into 2010. The EU stresses the importance of respect for humanitarian space and full access to all those affected by the conflict.

4. The EU will also consider dispatching experts to build capacity to better absorb international financial assistance and to assist Pakistan in dealing with the management of the international reconstruction and development assistance generated in the aftermath of counter-insurgency operations in the North-West of the country. Modalities of such assistance will be further explored with the Pakistani authorities, who have explicitly requested this, and other international partners, including the UN.
5. The EU agrees with the Pakistan Government that the Malakand Strategy could serve as a pilot for other parts of Pakistan.

2. Strengthen cooperation on security sector reform and rule of law

6. The EU and Pakistan will swiftly establish a regular counter-terrorism dialogue.
7. The EU will offer assistance for security sector reform (police/judiciary) and counter-terrorism capacity building. The EU will assist Pakistan in defining a comprehensive security/counter-terrorism strategy behind which to rally support.
8. The EU intends to support Pakistan's efforts to enhance its internal coordination of counter-terrorism measures and the implementation of a national counter-terrorism strategy. In cooperating with Pakistan at EU level on counter-terrorism, the civilian approach is the prime consideration. The EU thus intends to support the police and judicial authorities in this regard.
9. Specific support to Pakistan should be provided in the form of capacity building, in particular provision of EU expertise to relevant government institutions such as the Ministry of Justice (including courts and state prosecutor's offices) and the Ministry of Interior. Support should also be provided to provincial governments.
10. Apart from hands-on support in providing training and material, notably to the police, cooperation in this field should also involve dialogue on enhancing the rule of law, including justice sector reform.
11. The EU will form a series of internal working groups to implement subsequent counter-terrorism scoping reports, including follow-up on specific project proposals.

3. Strengthening cooperation on democracy and human rights

12. The EU will offer assistance to Pakistan for implementation of the recommendations of the EU's Electoral Observation Mission following the 2008 parliamentary elections. Areas to be addressed include election reform, improved election legislation, supporting the freedom of the press, training for political parties, development of a complaints and appeals procedure, strengthening oversight of the election administration by Parliament and training for media coverage of elections.
13. The EU will enhance the dialogue with Pakistan on human rights, bilaterally and within UN forums. The EU will provide support to human rights institutions and civil society, taking into account the Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review recommendations.
14. The EU will enhance its support to Pakistani civil society, specifically targeting media, political parties, think-tanks, NGOs and advocacy groups, in ways which are in line with internationally recognized norms and practices.

4. Step up cooperation on nuclear non-proliferation

15. The EU will engage in an enhanced expert dialogue in the context of existing frameworks on non-proliferation, in order to identify possible areas of cooperation.

5. Enhance cooperation on socio-economic development

Support for economic cooperation and trade

16. Progress on trade is a central element in the Joint Communiqué, as trade and investment are essential to the further development of Pakistan. The EU will work jointly with Pakistan towards further liberalisation of trade in goods and services with the aim to mutually enhance market access and converge on regulatory matters. This includes capacity building and technical and financial support, incorporating the existing resources for trade related technical assistance. The EU and Pakistan have agreed to step up a dedicated dialogue in order to enhance the bilateral trade relationship, including the possibility of a free trade agreement.

The EU will continue to assist Pakistan to meet the EU's sanitary and phyto-sanitary requirements for fishery and other products. The EU and Pakistan will explore additional cooperation in areas such as quality standards and intellectual property so as to further enhance the bilateral trade relationship. The EU will explore how aspects of the EU's preferential tariff regime (GSP+) might be looked at in the context of the preparation of the next GSP Regulation, thereby allowing new beneficiaries, including possibly Pakistan, to take advantage of this scheme.

Education, notably secondary education and vocational training

17. The EU will put continued emphasis on strengthening and improving the public education system whilst at the same time exploring means to prevent the use of schools as incubators for extremism. Activities of important partners in this field is given due regard.

Energy

18. Safe, secure, affordable and sustainable energy supplies are key elements for economic recovery, sustainable growth and development in Pakistan. The EU will support the Pakistan Government with technical assistance and other expertise. Priority will be given to renewable energy and energy efficiency to feed into the Energy Task Force of the Friends of Democratic Pakistan.

Multi-donor trust fund for the border regions

19. The establishment of a multi-donor trust fund administered by the World Bank to cover the North West Frontier Province, Balochistan and the FATA, as announced at the Friends of Democratic Pakistan Summit on 24 September 2009 in New York, should help to facilitate EU and Member States' support to these areas and deepen the political and strategic dialogue with the Pakistani Government.

6. Strengthening the EU-Pakistan dialogue and partnership

20. The EU will formalise regular meetings for policy exchanges in support of the wider agenda and pursue a mature and reciprocal dialogue with the Pakistani authorities.
21. Strengthened and more effective EU engagement in Pakistan should be complementary to firm action by the Government of Pakistan on good governance, democratic development, security sector reform, rule of law, human rights and administrative and economic reform.
22. The EU will invite Pakistan to establish formal troika dialogues at working group-/expert-level where appropriate (notably COTER), and in addition to the work already done in the context of the Joint Commission and its sub-groups (which should step up the frequency of their meetings). Together with EU Pakistan Foreign Ministers and Political Directors troikas, these meetings should directly feed into Summits.
23. The EU will establish high level contacts and visits engaging with all levels of the Pakistani administration. Given the key priority the EU is attributing to Pakistan, and the vast array of issues on the EU-Pakistani agenda which need regular evaluation, the EU will consider to hold further Summits with Pakistan to review and advance progress on the EU-Pakistan agenda.
24. The EU will explore enhanced cooperation between the Community and Member States' ODA to Pakistan in line with government policies and priorities. Several Member States have financial resources available for Pakistan, but only a limited number have the logistical and security capacity to deliver on the ground. Better alignment of resources between Member States and the Commission, such as the multi-donor trust fund mentioned above, will allow for greater alignment of resources and improved aid effectiveness in a difficult development context.
25. To achieve greater involvement of the EU in support of democratic processes in Pakistan, and taking into account recent expansion of the EUSR for Afghanistan's mandate, the EU will strengthen the EUSR's role and presence in Islamabad.

7. Improved EU coordination as part of international coordination

26. The EU will work to improve internal coordination, as well as coordination with key third countries in international forums dealing with Pakistan such as the Friends of Democratic Pakistan (FODP) and the Pakistan Development Forum (PDF). Assuming a stronger EU profile implies prior coordination and the formulation of position papers on key areas of assistance. The EU's aim is to keep the FODP as a forum for strategic discussion, and the PDF is meant for coordination and alignment on development strategy, as well as for development policy dialogue."