



D-AF_PV(2013)0620

MINUTES

of the meeting of 20 June 2013, from 09.00 to 10.00
Brussels

The meeting opened at 09.05 on Thursday, 20 June 2013, with Thijs Berman (Chair) in the chair.

1. Adoption of the draft agenda

The agenda was adopted without any changes.

2. Adoption of the minutes of the meeting of 29 May 2013

The minutes were adopted without any changes.

3. Chair's announcements

The Chair explained that, given the general level of attendance, no interpretation had been asked for this meeting. The fact that no other MEP was actually present vindicated this decision. This was most unfortunate, especially given the important developments which were now taking place in Afghanistan:

- On 18 June, President Karzai had announced the final phase of security transition from NATO troops to Afghan forces. At the handover ceremony in Kabul, NATO Secretary-General Rasmussen had called the event a milestone.
- On that same day, the Taliban had opened a political office in Qatar, with the stated intention "to build relations with the world, to meet other Afghans and to contact the

United Nations, other agencies and the media". But then, President Karzai had expressed his stern opposition.

The Afghan Ambassador Humayoun Tandar expressed dismay at the opening in Doha of an office flying the flag of the 'Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan', as per the name of the 1996-2001 Taliban regime. Bringing down the NATO flag in Kabul and raising the Taliban flag was a disastrous 'coincidence'. In their subsequent telephone conversation, President Karzai had made it clear to US State Secretary Kerry that Kabul would never participate to talks on such basis.

4. EP Resolution on the EU-Afghanistan Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development, 12 June 2013: analysis and follow-up

The Chair presented the main elements of the EP Resolution which he had co-sponsored.

Referring to § 9 about the inter-institutional cooperation between the Parliament and the EEAS¹, he asked the EEAS representative for clarification. The latter acknowledged the need for better communication on the negotiation of the Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development (CAPD). There had been delays on the Afghan side, which had not reacted to the proposal table in November 2012. Now that the Afghan authorities had designated a new Chief Negotiator, the EEAS hoped that Afghanistan would be in a position to provide a response and that the process would move ahead very quickly.

5. "Peace for all Afghans?" Conference, 3-4 June 2013: exchange of views about its recommendations with Ms. Anna Nijsters, Communication Coordinator

Having thanked the Chair for hosting the event in the Parliament, Anna Nijsters reported that the ENNA² Conference had highlighted the Afghan longing for peace. But it had also highlighted their fears, notably about the future of human and women's rights. In parts of the country where security had been handed back to the domestic forces, the security and overall situation of women had already worsened, notably because of family pressure.

All the Afghan participants had stated a very clear message to the EU: 'with the international military missions coming to an end, do not abandon us, not again. Stay involved in Afghanistan, for many more years, not to take it over from us, not only as trainers, but rather as mentors of the Afghan people'. They had all asked for a continuous support from the EU for the difficult task they wanted to accomplish, to achieve peace and security in a functioning and stable state representing their interests. Afghan NGOs' called for a long-term EU training and 'mentorship' of local police forces.

¹ "Regrets the fact that despite the EEAS's obligation to inform Parliament concerning all stages of the negotiations, Parliament has not been properly informed; recalls its new prerogatives in foreign affairs as stipulated in the Lisbon Treaty, and demands full cooperation from the EEAS and the Council on an issue of such major importance"; <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=MOTION&reference=P7-RC-2013-0274&language=EN>

² European Network of NGOs in Afghanistan

The civil society network had articulated 5 key recommendations to the European Union:

- Funding for the peace process should be available to civil society organizations in order to provide a platform for dialogue.
- Support the capacity building of Afghan civil society organisations, as essential monitoring instances of Afghan governance
- Support especially women's organizations, since they are crucial for a sustainable peace, implement programmes on women's empowerment, security and rights awareness.
- Monitor the upcoming elections and the process leading to it, provide guidelines and tools for a functioning state.
- Do not forget the economy, work together with the Afghan government on job creation.

Ms. Nijsters said that ENNA had been very pleased with the participation of Development Commissioner Piebalgs. He had made several important remarks about future engagement in Afghanistan, stating notably: "We will find a way to help the Afghans, Afghanistan stays on the top of the agenda". Ms. Nijsters concluding by expressing her hope that this commitment would be fully supported by the Parliament.

The Chair also expressed his appreciation for Commissioner Piebalg's participation to the Conference. He had taken good note of his commitment for continued support. The Chair also shared Commissioner Piebalg's vision of "six pillars for a lasting peace":

- a credible peace process;
- the success of next year's presidential elections;
- the urgent creation of jobs;
- increased efforts to safeguard human rights, in particular women's rights;
- the set-up of an effective formal justice system to, restore the belief of all Afghans in equality before the law -the lack of which was one of the worst failings of the state-building project in Afghanistan.

Commenting that, rather than 'Resolute Support', a more adequate name for the successor force to ISAF may be 'Resolute Withdrawal'.... Chair Berman insisted that it was crucial for the EU to remain present and engaged with Afghans, in Afghanistan. Specific attention for and support to the NGOs should be given by the EU.

As far as the mentoring of police forces was concerned, the Chair wondered whether the current format of EUPOL would be strong enough. For his part, Ambassador Tandar expressed hope that EUPOL would be prolonged beyond 2014. EEAS explained that discussions on this issue had started: on 14 June, General Mujtaba Patang, the Afghan Interior Minister, had visited Brussels to discuss future cooperation in law enforcement capacities with the Political & Security Committee. A decision about the future of EUPOL beyond its current mandate would require a consensus from the EU Member States.

Both EEAS and DEVCO representatives¹ confirmed that EU assistance would continue after 2014, with emphasis on NGOs working in the fields of human and women rights, watchdog and advocacy, media and information, rule of law and local governance. They had listened very carefully to the requests formulated at the Conference and would try to take them on board to

¹ EEAS: Paul Godfrey, Afghanistan Desk Officer; DEVCO: Ambra Longatti, Afghanistan Desk Officer

the largest extent possible in the future programming the EU support. They also circulated a copy of Commissioner Piebalgs' speech, which is annexed to this report.

See Annex I for the Speech by Commissioner Piebalgs and Annex II for the presentation from Ana Nijsters (ENNA).

6. Any other business

In her answer to a question from Ms. Sabine Meyer¹, the DEVCO representative assured that EC funds had not been affected by the Kabul Bank scandal.

6. Date and place of the next meeting

Members were informed that the next meeting of the Delegation for relations with Afghanistan would be announced electronically.

The meeting closed at 10.00

¹ Political Adviser, Greens/ALE

**ПРИСЪСТВЕН ЛИСТ/LISTA DE ASISTENCIA/PREZENČNÍ LISTINA/DELTAGERLISTE/
ANWESENHEITSLISTE/KOHALOLIJATE NIMEKIRI/KΑΤΑΣΤΑΣΗ ΠΑΡΟΝΤΩΝ/RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/
LISTE DE PRÉSENCE/ELENCO DI PRESENZA/APMEKLĒJUMU REĢISTRŠ/DALYVIŲ SĄRAŠAS/JELENLÉTI ÍV/
REGISTRU TA' ATTENDENZA/PRESENTIELIJST/LISTA OBECNOŠCI/LISTA DE PRESENÇAS/LISTA DE PREZENŢĂ/
PREZENČNÁ LISTINA/SEZNAM NAVZOČIH/LÄSNÄOLOLISTA/DELTAGARLISTA**

Бюро/Mesa/Pfedsednictvo/Formandskabet/Vorstand/Juhatus/Προεδρείο/Bureau/Ufficio di presidenza/Prezidijs/Biuras/Elnökség/Prezydium/Birou/Predsednictvo/Predsedstvo/Puheenjohtajisto/Presidiet (*)
Thijs Berman
Членове/Diputados/Poslanci/Medlemmer/Mitglieder/Parlamendiliikmed/Μέλη/Members/Députés/Deputati/Deputāti/Nariai/Képviselek/Membri/Leden/Posłowie/Deputados/Deputați/Jäsenet/Ledamöter
Carlo Fidanza
Заместници/Suplentes/Náhradníci/Stedfortrædere/Stellvertreter/Asendusliikmed/Αναπληρωτές/Substitutes/Suppléants/Supplenti/Aizstājēji/Pavaduojantys nariai/Póttagok/Sostituti/Plaatsvervangers/Zastępcy/Membros suplentes/Supleanți/Náhradníci/Namestniki/Varajäsenet/Suppleanter

187 (2)
193 (3)
49 (6) (Точка от дневния ред/Punto del orden del día/Bod pořadu jednání (OJ)/Punkt på dagsordenen/Tagesordnungspunkt/Päevakorrapunkt/Ημερήσια Διάταξη Σημείο/Agenda item/Point OJ/Punto all'ordine del giorno/Darba kārtības punkts/Darbotvarkes punktas/Napirendi pont/Punt fuq l-aġenda/Agendapunt/Punkt porządku dziennego/Ponto OD/Punct de pe ordinea de zi/Bod programu schôdze/Točka UL/Esityslistan kohta/Föredragningslista punkt)

Наблюдатели/Observadores/Pozorovatelé/Observatører/Beobachter/Vaatlejad/Παρατηρητές/Observers/Observateurs/Osservatori/Novērotāji/Stebētājai/Megfigyelők/Osservatori/Waarnemers/Observatorzy/Observadores/Observatori/Pozorovatelia/Opazovalci/Tarkkailijat/Observatörer

По покана на председателя/Por invitación del presidente/Na pozvání předsedy/Efter indbydelse fra formanden/Auf Einladung des Vorsitzenden/Esimehe kutsel/Με πρόσκληση του Προέδρου/At the invitation of the Chair(wo)man/Sur l'invitation du président/Su invito del presidente/Pēc priekšsēdētāja uzaicinājuma/Pirmininkui pakvietus/Az elnök meghívására/Fuq stedina tal-President/Op uitnodiging van de voorzitter/Na zaproszenie Przewodniczącego/A convite do Presidente/La invitația președintelui/Na pozvanie predsedu/Na povabilo predsednika/Puheenjohtajan kutsusta/På ordförandens inbjudan
Ambassador Tandar, Abeda Osman; Anna Nijsters

Съвет/Consejo/Rada/Rådet/Rat/Nõukogu/Συμβούλιο/Council/Conseil/Consiglio/Padome/Taryba/Tanács/Kunsill/Raad/Conselho/Consiliu/Svet/Neuvosto/Rådet (*)	
Комисия/Comisión/Komise/Kommissionen/Kommission/Euroopa Komisjon/Επιτροπή/Commission/Commissione/Komisija/Bizottság/Kummissjoni/Commissie/Komisja/Comissão/Comisie/Komisja/Komissio/Kommissionen (*)	
Ambra Longhati	
Европейска служба за външна дейност/Европска служба pro vnější činnost/EU-Udenrigstjenesten/Europäischer Auswärtiger Dienst/Euroopa välisteenistus/Ευρωπαϊκή Υπηρεσία Εξωτερικής Δράσης/European External Action service/Servicio Europeo de Acción Exterior/Service européen pour l'action extérieure/Servizio europeo per l'azione esterna/Eiropas Ārējās darbības dienests/Europos išorės veiksmų tarnyba/Európai Kültügyi Szolgálat/Servizz Ewropew għall-Azzjoni Esterna/Europese dienst voor extern optreden/Europejska Služba Działañ Zewnętrznych/Serviço Europeu para a Acção Externa/Serviciul european pentru acțiune externă/Európska služba pre vonkajšiu činnost/Evropska služba za zunanje delovanje/Euroopan ulkosuhdehallinto/Europeiska avdelningen för yttre åtgärd (*)	
Paul Geoffrey;	
Други институции/Otras instituciones/Ostatní orgány a instituce/Andre institutioner/Andere Organe/Muud institutsioonid/Άλλα θεσμικά όργανα/Other institutions/Autres institutions/Altre istituzioni/Citas iestādes/Kitos institucijos/Más intézmények/Istituzjonijiet oħra/Andere instellingen/Inne instytucje/Outras Instituições/Alte instituții/Iné inštitúcie/Druge institucije/Muut toimeilimet/Andra institutioner/organ	

Други учасници/Otros participantes/Ostatní účastníci/Endvidere deltog/Andere Teilnehmer/Muud osalejad/Επίσης Παρόντες/Other participants/Autres participants/Altri partecipanti/Citi klātesošie/Kiti dalyviai/Más résztvevők/Partecipanti oħra/Andere aanwezigen/Inni uczestnicy/Outros participantes/Alți participanți/Iní účastníci/Dруги udeleženci/Muut osallistujat/Övriga deltagare	
Laura Ballarin, Malgorzata, Weber, Laliulina, Marco Dugnam, Monia Hidalgo, Beatrice Wanton, Michelle Craeng	

Секретариат на политическите групи/Secretaría de los Grupos políticos/Sekretariát politických skupin/Gruppernes sekretariat/Sekretariat der Fraktionen/Fraktsioonide sekretariaat/Γραμματεία των Πολιτικών Ομάδων/Secretariats of political groups/Secrétariat des groupes politiques/Segreteria gruppi politici/Politiske grupu sekretariāts/Frakciju sekretoriai/Képviseletcsoportok titkársága/Sekretarjat gruppi političi/Fractiesecretariaten/Sekretariat Grup Politycznych/Secr. dos grupos políticos/Secretariate grupuri politice/Sekretariát politických skupin/Sekretariat političnih skupin/Poliitisten ryhmien sihteeristöt/Gruppernas sekretariat	
PPE S&D ALDE ECR Verts/ALE GUE/NGL EFD NI	Rino Trombetta Sabine Meyer

Кабинет на председателя/Gabinete del Presidente/Kancelář předsedy/Formandens Kabinet/Kabinett des Präsidenten/Presidendi kantselei/Γραφείο Προέδρου/President's Office/Cabinet du Président/Gabinetto del Presidente/Priekšsēdētāja kabinets/Pirmininko kabinetas/Elnöki hivatal/Kabinett tal-President/Kabinet van de Voorzitter/Gabinet Przewodniczącego/Gabinete do Presidente/Cabinet Președinte/Kancelária predsedu/Urad predsednika/Puhemiehen kabinetti/Talmannens kansli	
--	--

Καбинет на генералния секретар/Gabinete del Secretario General/Kancelář generálního tajemníka/Generalsekretærens Kabinet/Kabinett des Generalsekretærs/Peasekretári büroo/Γραφείο Γενικού Γραμματέα/Secretary-General's Office/Cabinet du Secrétaire général/Gabinetto del Segretario generale/Generalsekretära kabinets/Generalinio sekretoriaus kabinetas/Főtitkári hivatal/Kabinett tas-Segretarju Ġenerali/Kabinet van de secretaris-generaal/Gabinet Sekretarza Generalnego/Gabinete do Secretário-Geral/Cabinet Secretar General/Kancelária generálneho tajomníka/Urząd generalnego sekretarza/Pääsihteerin kabinetti/Generalsekreterarens kansli

Генерална дирекция/Dirección General/Generální ředitelství/Generaldirektorat/Generaldirektion/Peadirektoraat/Γενική Διεύθυνση/Directorate-General/Direction générale/Direzione generale/Generāldirektorāts/Generalinis direktoratas/Főigazgatóság/Direttorat Generali/Direktoraten-generaal/Dyrekcja Generalna/Direcção-Geral/Direcții Generale/Generálne riaditeľstvo/Generalni direktorat/Pääosasto/Generaldirektorat	
DG PRES DG IPOL DG EXPO DG COMM DG PERS DG INLO DG TRAD DG INTE DG FINS DG ITEC	Sandro D'Angelo; Marc Bentinck
Правна служба/Servicio Jurídico/Právní služba/Juridisk Tjeneste/Juristischer Dienst/Öigusteenistus/Νομική Υπηρεσία/Legal Service/Service juridique/Servizio giuridico/Juridiskais dienests/Teisės tarnyba/Jogi szolgálat/Servizz legali/Juridische Dienst/Wydział prawny/Servíço Jurídico/Serviciu Juridic/Právny servis/Pravna služba/Oikeudellinen yksikkö/Rättstjänsten	
Секретариат на комисията/Secretaría de la comisión/Sekretariat výboru/Udvalgssekretariatet/Ausschusseksretariat/Komisjoni sekretariaat/Γραμματεία επιτροπής/Committee secretariat/Secrétariat de la commission/Segreteria della commissione/Komitejas sekretariāts/Komiteo sekretoriatas/A bizottság titkársága/Sekretarjat tal-kumitat/Commissiesecretariaat/Sekretariat komisji/Sekretariado da comissão/Secretariat comisie/Sekretariat odbora/Valiokunnan sihteeristö/Utskottssekretariatet	
François Massoulie	
Сътрудник/Asistente/Asistent/Assistent/Assistenz/Βοηθός/Assistant/Assistente/Palīgs/Padējējas/Asszisztens/Asystent/Pomočnik/Avustaja/Assistenten	
Ainhoa Markuleta	

- * (P) = Председател/Presidente/Předseda/Formand/Vorsitzender/Esimees/Πρόεδρος/Chair(wo)man/Président/Priekšsēdētājs/Pirmininkas/Elnök/President/Voorzitter/Przewodniczący/Preşedinte/Predseda/Predsednik/Puheenjohtaja/Ordförande
- (VP) = Заместник-председател/Vicepresidente/Mistopředseda/Næstformand/Stellvertretender Vorsitzender/Aseesimees/Αντιπρόεδρος/Vice-Chair(wo)man/Vice-Président/Priekšsēdētāja vietnieks/Pirmininko pavaduotojas/Alelnök/Víci President/Ondervoorzitter/Wiceprzewodniczący/Vice-Présidente/Vicepreşedinte/Podpredseda/Podpredsednik/Varapuheenjohtaja/Vice ordförande
- (M) = Член/Miembro/Člen/Medlem/Mitglied/Parlamendiliige/Μέλος/Member/Membre/Membro/Deputāts/Narys/Képvisező/Membru/Lid/Członek/Membro/Membru/Člen/Poslanec/Jäsen/Ledamot
- (F) = Длъжностно лице/Funcionario/Úředník/Tjenestemand/Beamter/Ametnik/Υπάλληλος/Official/Fonctionnaire/Funzionario/Ierēdnis/Pareigūnas/Tisztviselő/Ufficial/Ambtenaar/Urządник/Funcionário/Funçionar/Úradník/Urädnik/Virkamies/Tjänsteman

SPEECH
BY COMMISSIONER ANDRIS PIEBALGS
at
the ENNA conference on “Peace for all Afghans?”
European Parliament, 3 June 2013

Introduction

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to start by thanking the co-organisers of this conference – ENNA, Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) and ACBAR – for this opportunity. Your organisations have been tireless in raising many of the key issues on Afghanistan. You have also been vital in partnering many Afghan organisations to develop their awareness and capacity. That is a strong and important link between EU and Afghanistan civil society. And together, you have engaged and influenced policymakers both in the EU, and more importantly, in Afghanistan.

An active Afghan civil society constitutes one of the fundamental ingredients to achieve inclusive economic development and peace. And the challenge of bringing lasting peace to Afghanistan is a daunting one. You have to go back 35 years, to the late 1970s, to find an Afghanistan free from violent conflict. That isn't even a distant memory for most Afghans. It is estimated that some 80% of Afghans were not even born then. The Afghan people deserve peace, so what can be done to make peace a reality?

Clearly, if achieving an inclusive peace was simple, we would not be sitting here today. But I wanted to highlight six pillars that I see as the basis for building lasting peace in Afghanistan.

Six pillars for lasting peace

First, there must be a credible peace process that establishes the common ground between the main protagonists and puts in place the right mechanisms for finding consensus in areas of difference. A number of worthy international and Afghan initiatives are underway that aim to reach out to the insurgents.

The European Union made its position very clear at the Bonn conference in 2011. We support an inclusive Afghan-led process with three important conditions:

ONE: that Afghanistan can never again become a haven for international terrorists;

TWO: that all participants in the process renounce violence;

And THREE: that any settlement recognises and respects the Afghan constitution, including – specifically – the rights and status of women.

With those three important conditions, we would welcome the insurgent groups sitting down with and with representatives of all Afghans to begin to shape an inclusive vision for the country. Civil society should have a very important role in defining that vision. The EU is currently facilitating the input of civil society into the High Peace Council. We are supporting the development of a Memorandum of Understanding on the input of civil society. And we intend to monitor that process.

From an EU perspective, we hope that that vision would be one that builds on the progress made in the last decade; one that finds consensus on the role of religion in the state; one that envisages robust institutions that can lead Afghanistan's development away from some of the worst development indicators seen - not just on the Asian continent, but anywhere in the world.

Any successful peace process in Afghanistan will depend on better regional ties, and especially in improved Afghanistan-Pakistan relations. At times, both Afghanistan and Pakistan have shown an increased appreciation of their interdependence and of the collective need to combat extremism. Unfortunately, there have also been times where the rhetoric has gone too far, with lasting damage to the relationship. The recent Pakistani elections offer a new opportunity to intensify constructive dialogue on how to bring peace to the region.

Second, next year's presidential elections will be critical for Afghanistan for many different reasons, not least the marking of a first democratic transfer of power in Afghanistan's history. But it will also be critical for the peace process. The election of a president widely accepted as embodying the political will of the Afghan people will be an important signal to all Afghans that democracy is founded on solid ground. It will be a message to the insurgents that they face increasing marginalisation if they fail to lay down their arms and pursue peaceful dialogue.

The European Union is one of those in the international community pushing hardest for the elections to be as fair as they can be. Unfortunately, they will probably not be as good as the recent Pakistani elections – where so many people refused to be intimidated by terrorist acts and demonstrated their belief in democracy. But they can and should be step forward from the elections in 2009 and 2010.

For that to happen, it is vital that the Structural and Electoral Laws are passed by parliament as a matter of urgency. Without these, the elections risk going ahead without the broad political support for those bodies responsible for ensuring electoral impartiality, including the Independent Electoral Commission and the Electoral Complaints Commission.

Political parties, parliament and civil society to work together ensure that the fraud prevention mechanisms are not only in place, but widely accepted as robust and effective. These steps will help build the confidence of the parties, the media and, most importantly, ordinary Afghans that these elections will really mark a step forward for the country.

Third, there is an urgent need to create jobs. We know from experience that one of main challenges in any peace process is to find employment for ex-combatants. Afghanistan currently risks a downward economic spiral that would undermine its aspirations for 'self-

reliance'. Reducing the dependence on external funding will take many years. But it is a process that needs to start. Whatever way you measure it, Afghanistan is the largest aid recipient in the world. As the international presence reduces, significant economic growth will be needed to create the jobs to replace those funded, essentially, by the international presence.

Most Afghans work in agriculture and – in the short term – growth and jobs must come from increased agricultural productivity. Increased productivity can have a number of additional positive effects: stimulating the private sector in rural areas; and offering a viable alternative to those Afghans who want to move away from growing poppy. Supporting growth and jobs is one of the reasons that the EU has prioritised funding for agriculture since 2007. I intend that we will continue to do so until at least 2020.

To achieve growth in the more medium term, there is a critical need to restore levels of economic confidence. That means improving the investment climate, so that both Afghan and foreign investors see the benefits of starting businesses in Afghanistan, of investing in businesses in Afghanistan, and reversing the dramatic capital outflow we have seen in the last couple of years.

In the long term, reaching the desired sustained high growth levels necessary to reduce reliance on foreign aid will depend on the responsible exploitation of Afghanistan's natural resources – oil, gas, iron and copper. A mining law to help ensure this has been under discussion, but not passed, for many months now. Passing the law will be an important signal to investors and help ensure that the jobs being created will be Afghan jobs. And that the revenues will go into the Afghan treasury's coffers – not to a warlord or corrupt politician. Because that is a story we have seen too many times before.

Which brings me to my fourth point. Transparent flows of public funding both at the centre and at the sub-provincial level are the backbone of any functioning state. Without it, there can be no democratic oversight of government. Waste and corruption flourish. Corruption is a cancer that eats away at belief in government and the ability to deliver for its people. Corruption will impact heavily on the willingness of ordinary people in Europe and in other donor countries to continue to provide the exceptional levels of assistance Afghanistan has benefitted from in the last decade.

Fifth, more needs to be done to safeguard human rights – in particular women's rights. Human rights are always a priority for the EU. In Afghanistan, the need for action is particularly acute. Much progress has been made – thanks in no small part to the efforts of people in this room and the efforts of the organisations they represent. But the recent discussion in the Afghan Parliament on the rights and wrongs of the law on Eliminating Violence Against Women showed how far we still have to go before women are able to enjoy their full rights.

The EU will continue to argue that the rights of women can never be the price paid for a peace agreement. The ten year EU-Afghanistan Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development, which is currently being negotiated, will make full reference to human rights obligations, including the implementation of national and international commitments to protect the rights of women and children. We would welcome the government reiterating its commitment by making the long overdue appointments to the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), and, most importantly, the Chief Justice.

Which brings me to my last, but by no means least important, pillar. I want to focus on an area that has been neglected, and yet is critical to making progress in all the other areas I have highlighted – justice and the rule of law. The failure to put in place an effective formal justice system and restore the belief of all Afghans in equality before the law is one of the worst failings of the state-building project in Afghanistan.

Of course, this was not a straightforward task. But the failure to take concerted action strengthens the pull of the insurgents and their use of summary justice; it reinforces concerns that the oversight of the elections will not be fair; it impacts on economic growth, as investors lose confidence in contract enforcement and fair dispute resolution; and it undermines the implementation of laws safeguarding the rights of women and reduces their access to justice. In short, it affects all our priorities. Which is why I plan to make support for the rule of law a key priority in our development engagement.

In this way we will be investing in civilian policing, investing in building judicial institutions, investing in the capacity of prosecutors, and investing in the ability of parliament and civil society to hold people to account.

Conclusion

I will leave you with one final thought. Once a peace agreement is in place – whenever that might be – Afghanistan will need to begin a process of nationwide healing. To start to put the past behind it and look to a future not determined by terrorism, violence and conflict. But to do that Afghanistan will need to put in place a reconciliation process in which people have confidence that the impunity for war crimes and human rights abuses we have seen over more than three decades will not continue.

Without that, I fear there can be no real peace for all Afghans – the peace which they have not had for so long, and which they deserve.

Thank you.

Meeting
Delegation for relations with Afghanistan – Thursday, 20 June 2013
European Parliament – Brussels

“Peace for all Afghans?”

Report of conference 3-4 June 2013

by Anna Nijsters – ENNA (European Network of NGOs in Afghanistan)

Now that the official peace talks have started, today in Doha, provisionally only the United States and the Taliban are involved, the question is what the people of Afghanistan themselves are expecting from those negotiations, and if and how ordinary Afghans will be involved at all in the next peace process.

Indeed, after more than three decades of violent conflict, the Afghans are longing for peace, that much is clear. But in order to achieve a sustainable peace the process leading to it has to be inclusive, with full respect of human and women’s rights. It means that Afghans themselves, civil society, should be involved in all stages of the peace process.

ENNA organized the conference two weeks ago in this parliament, together with CMI (Crisis Management Initiative from Helsinki – Heinrich Boll Stiftung from Berlin – ACBAR (Coordinating Agency for Afghan relief) precisely to give a voice to those who want and should to be involved.

We invited women and human rights activists and politicians from Afghanistan, they came to Brussels with their courageous stories, also with the latest facts and figures about the lack of security, especially for women, though with an optimistic, yet realistic view about the current situation and future prospects.

They all came with a very clear message: with the international military missions coming to an end, **do not abandon us, not again.** Stay involved in Afghanistan, for many more years, not to take it over from us, not only as trainers, but rather as mentors of the Afghan people.

They all asked for a continuous support from the EU for the difficult task they want to accomplish, to achieve peace and security in a functioning and stable state that represents their interests.

They confirmed that very important achievements have been made with international help, especially in the education and health sectors, in building an infrastructure and in strengthening the rule of law and respect for human rights.

But those achievements would be in real danger if the international development resources were to decrease, as many member states of the EU are considering. Especially women fear for their rights and for the future of their daughters.

A new study presented by Hasina Safi, of the Afghan Women’s Network, made clear that women’s security is rapidly deteriorating in several parts of Afghanistan, freedom of movement has become increasingly restricted, family pressure is growing to remain home. This means that women and girls are deprived of opportunities to empower them, including education and access to services and justice. However, people support the transfer of leadership to the own Afghan security forces and police. But those forces need more training and proper technical equipment.

The Afghans at the conference agreed it is up to them, representatives of civil society, to play a central role in preserving the gains that have been made and in making further progress in the country's reconstruction.

They convinced us that many of them are prepared for this task, truly want to take their future in their own hands, but they need a long term mentorship from the international community.

Therefore, ENNA emphasizes in the policy recommendations, presented at the conference, that Afghan civil society and the international community are still partners in fostering sustainable development for all in a stable Afghanistan.

Our 5 key recommendations to the European Union are :

- Funding for the peace process should be available to civil society organizations in order to provide a platform for dialogue.
- Support the capacity building of Afghan civil society organisations, as essential monitoring instances of Afghan governance
- Support especially women's organizations, since they are crucial for a sustainable peace, implement programmes on women's empowerment, security and rights awareness.
- Monitor the upcoming elections and the process leading to it, provide guidelines and tools for a functioning state.
- Do not forget the economy, work together with the Afghan government on job creation.

Meanwhile, the members of ENNA recommend to the Afghan government to engage in peace talks only with partners renouncing violence and respecting the Afghan Constitution. Human and women's rights are not negotiable at any stage of the peace process. Instead women should be encouraged to participate and take leading positions (High Peace Council)

Moreover, the Afghan government should recognize civil society as an important actor in the peace process and in Afghanistan's long-term development.

ENNA was very pleased with the participation of European Commissioner Piebalgs, who made several important remarks on his future engagement in Afghanistan. He concluded : "We will find a way to help the Afghans, Afghanistan stays on the top of the agenda".

I hope that this will be fully supported by this Parliament .