



Joint press statement on the 6th EU-Afghanistan Interparliamentary Meeting

On 15 July 2021, Members of the European Parliament under the leadership of the Chair of the Delegation for relations with Afghanistan, Petras Auštrevičius, and the National Assembly of Afghanistan held the 6th EU-Afghanistan Interparliamentary Meeting. The Afghan Delegation consisted also of high-ranking representatives of the executive branch.

In his opening remarks, Chair Auštrevičius expressed his contentment and expectation to maintain regular working relations with the National Assembly of Afghanistan. He pointed on the nexus between security on the one side and human rights and development on the other side and the need to stay engaged in both fields. The European Parliament is particularly vigilant when it comes to safeguarding the basic principles of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, as well as security, in a future Afghanistan.

In her key notes, Acting Minister of Women's Affairs Ms. Hasina Safi underlined the achievements for women and girls during the last two decades, notably in the area of education, and the need to preserve these gains.

Against the background of a rapidly deteriorating security situation, Members discussed the future of the peace process after the foreign troop withdrawal. They articulated their deep concerns about the current developments, deplored violent actions of the Taliban and called the Taliban a responsible party for continuous fighting and atrocities committed. Members urged the negotiating parties, notably the Taliban, to openly engage into the peace talks and agree to a ceasefire and a peace agreement. Both sides reiterated that Taliban's safe haven in Pakistan should be disrupted and urged Pakistan to convince the Taliban to enter meaningful peace negotiations. Afghanistan can only develop in a peaceful and stable environment.

In a second panel debate, Members discussed specifically the women's role in the peace process and future engagements with the EU. They expressed their ongoing commitment to engage with human rights, in particular women's rights. The Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process must include the role of women and preserving their rights. Therefore, Members fully support the requests from Afghan women to be more involved in the negotiations on the part of the Afghan Government, and in general, in the political life of the country. In a pluralist and democratic system, civil society organisations, including women's organisations, play a vital role for the political and civic life in Afghanistan.

Petras Auštrevičius,
Chair of the Delegation for relations with Afghanistan of the European Parliament

Naheed Farid,
Head of the Human Rights Committee of the National Assembly of Afghanistan

Brussels and Kabul, 15 July 2021