



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Committee on Development

2009/2217(INI)

11.5.2010

OPINION

of the Committee on Development

for the Committee on Foreign Affairs

on a new strategy in Afghanistan
(2009/2217(INI))

Rapporteur: Charles Goerens

PA_NonLeg

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Development asks the Committee on Foreign Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Points out that development efforts must focus on improving the capabilities of Afghan government structures and that the Afghans themselves must be closely involved in setting priorities and during the implementation phases, with a view to fostering the process of taking ownership and responsibility at national and community level; draws attention, therefore, to the role of civil society organisations as an essential means of ensuring Afghan citizens are involved in the process of democratisation and reconstruction and guarding against the risk of corruption;
2. Calls for humanitarian aid to be distributed on a geographically more homogenous basis, in the light of an analysis of needs and in keeping with the requirement for urgency;
3. Points out that any breach of the principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence which actors invoke in their work makes the latter more vulnerable on the ground, particularly as they will continue to be present on the ground long after troops have been withdrawn; takes the view, therefore, that military personnel should distribute humanitarian aid only in entirely exceptional circumstances, in recognition of the neutral, impartial and independent nature of the work of humanitarian actors, in full compliance with the relevant international standards, as codified in the 'Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in Humanitarian Emergencies' (MCDA) and advocated in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid;
4. Emphasises the importance of achieving the Millennium Development Goals and deplors the fact that, although progress has been made in some areas, Afghanistan has descended from rank 173 in 2003 to rank 181 (out of 182 countries) in UNDP's Human Development Index and whereas mortality rates among children aged under five and maternal mortality rates in Afghanistan remain among the highest in the world, considers that these specific objectives, as well as access to health and education, in particular for women, should not be neglected, but urges that special attention be paid to improved income generation as well as to the construction of a functioning justice system;
5. Underlines that the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reveals in its study of January 2010 that corruption is the biggest concern of the population and that revenues generated by bribery amounts to almost one quarter (23%) of Afghanistan's GDP;
6. Takes the view that the fight against corruption should be at the core of the peace building process in Afghanistan, since bribery causes misallocation of resources, constitutes an obstacle for the access to basic public services, such as health or education, and represents a huge impediment to the country's socio-economic development; emphasises likewise that corruption undermines confidence in the public sector and the government, and constitutes consequently a major threat to the stability of the country; therefore, urges the EU to give special attention to the fight against corruption when providing assistance to the country;

7. Notes that 80% of the population is settled in the rural area while the arable land per capita diminished from 0.55 ha in 1980 to 0.25 ha in 2007; highlights that Afghanistan continues to be highly vulnerable to adverse climatic conditions or rising food prices on the world market, while the widespread and indiscriminate use of landmines poses a significant risk to successful rural development; deems in this context of primary importance to continue and enhance funding geared towards rural development and local food production to achieve food security;
8. Points out that more than 90% of heroin in Europe originates from Afghanistan and that the cost to public health in European countries runs into billions of dollars; recalls that the challenges posed by the drug economy in Afghanistan must be tackled not only nationally but internationally by addressing all links of the drug chain, which requires in particular; assistance to farmers to reduce supply; drug prevention and treatment to curb demand, and law enforcement against the intermediaries; in particular, proposes massive investment in the establishment of a comprehensive agricultural and rural policy which offers opium producers a credible, lasting alternative; insists also upon the need to integrate environment in the agriculture and rural strategy as degradation of the environment, caused for instance by poor management of water resources or the destruction of natural forest, is one of the main barrier to the development of agricultural economy;
9. Takes note of the fact that, despite over 350 million euros in donor assistance, the presidential and provincial council elections held in Afghanistan in August 2009 were marred by irregularities and fraud, putting the legitimacy of the Karzai government under heavy strain; condemns in this context the unravelling of the independent status of the Electoral Complaints Commission, as the last opportunity to independently analyse the electoral process and expose possible fraud, by the President in February 2010;
10. Points out that any disarmament and reintegration strategy must take close account of the problem of the return of ex-combatants and refugees to their villages of origin;
11. Stresses the importance of coordinating reconstruction and development efforts at regional level in order to promote cross-border development in a region where ethnic and tribal links often transcend national borders.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	10.5.2010
Result of final vote	+: 26 -: 0 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Thijs Berman, Michael Cashman, Nirj Deva, Leonidas Donskis, Charles Goerens, Catherine Grèze, Enrique Guerrero Salom, Eva Joly, Franziska Keller, Gay Mitchell, Norbert Neuser, Maurice Ponga, Michèle Striffler, Ivo Vajgl, Anna Záborská, Iva Zanicchi
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Kriton Arsenis, Krzysztof Lisek, Miguel Angel Martínez Martínez, Emma McClarkin, Cristian Dan Preda, Niccolò Rinaldi
Substitute(s) under Rule 187(2) present for the final vote	Sylvie Guillaume, Jolanta Emilia Hibner, Anna Ibrisagic, Derek Vaughan, Marie-Christine Vergiat