



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Committee on Development

2013/2168(INI)

2.12.2013

OPINION

of the Committee on Development

for the Committee on Foreign Affairs

on Pakistan's regional role and political relations with the EU
(2013/2168(INI))

Rapporteur: Jan Zahradil

PA_NonLeg

SUGGESTIONS

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

- A. whereas Pakistan is a semi-industrialised, lower middle-income country with around one third of its population living below the poverty line; whereas Pakistan is ranked in 146th place among the 187 countries listed in the 2012 Human Development Index (HDI), down from 145th place in the listing for 2011; whereas the economic situation of Pakistan has been harmed by successive natural disasters, and whereas a high level of insecurity, instability and widespread corruption in the country weaken its economic growth and limit the government's ability to develop the state;
- B. whereas Pakistan is vulnerable to a wide range of hazards, predominantly floods and earthquakes; whereas the volatile security situation, together with Pakistan's social challenges, are working as a catalyst in increasing its vulnerability; whereas multiple years of disasters have exhausted the coping strategies of already impoverished communities and severely reduced their resilience to future disasters;
- C. whereas the aim of the EU-Pakistan five-year Engagement Plan of 2012 is to build a strategic relationship and forge a partnership for peace and development rooted in shared values and principles;
 1. Recalls that unequal feudalistic land ownership in rural Pakistan remains unaddressed, with 2.5 % of the population owning over 40 % of the land and with nearly half of the rural population owning nothing at all; stresses that landlessness and lack of access to irrigation water and other production facilities perpetuate rural poverty and social instability; underlines that access to secure, affordable, clean and sustainable energy, safe drinking water and sustainable services for health and education, as well as security, play a crucial role in improving the lives of the Pakistani people and ensuring the long-term development of the country;
 2. Underlines that a proactive human rights agenda – including, inter alia, measures to end sectarian attacks, protect the rights of religious minorities and women, ensure media freedom, end counter-terrorism abuses and restore the moratorium on the death penalty – is essential for Pakistan's development;
 3. Is concerned about the country's extremely low tax revenue, amounting to only 9.1 % of GDP in 2011, one of the lowest ratios in the world; is of the view that fundamental tax reform is required to boost public finances, especially spending on health, education and welfare;
 4. Remains deeply concerned about the quality of education and, in a related manner, the alarming situation of women in many parts of Pakistan; calls for concrete and visible measures to enforce women's fundamental rights in the society, including the enactment of legislation against domestic violence, steps to improve the investigation and prosecution of honour killings and acid attacks, and a revision of the legislation that facilitates impunity; points out the need to ensure better access to education, better integration of women in the labour market and better maternal healthcare;

5. Notes that the EU, as a major donor, remains committed to assisting Pakistan in achieving its long-term development goals and ensuring sustained and broad-based economic growth; recalls the EU-Pakistan five-year Engagement Plan, containing priorities such as good governance, cooperation in the field of women's empowerment, energy, sustainable agriculture and dialogue on human rights;
6. Welcomes the democratic consolidation that was demonstrated by the first-ever peaceful transition of power from one democratically elected government to another after general elections in May 2013, but raises concerns about the volatile security situation, the risk of Islamic radicalism and the continued terrorist attacks targeting moderate Muslims as well as religious minority communities such as Ahmadis, Shiites and Christians;
7. Calls on the Pakistani Government to fulfil its security obligations and responsibilities by further engaging in the fight against extremism, terrorism and radicalisation, with the implementation of strict and uncompromising security measures and law enforcement, as well as by addressing inequality and socio-economic issues likely to fuel the radicalisation of Pakistani youth;
8. Reiterates its deep concern that Pakistan's blasphemy laws – which can carry the death sentence and are often used to justify censorship, criminalisation, persecution and, in certain cases, the murder of members of political and religious minorities – are open to a misuse that affects people of all faiths in Pakistan; underlines that the refusal to reform or repeal the blasphemy laws creates an environment of persistent vulnerability for minority communities; calls on the Pakistani government to implement a moratorium on the use of these laws, as a first step towards revising or revoking them, and to investigate and prosecute, as appropriate, campaigns of intimidation, threats, and violence against Christians, Ahmadis, and other vulnerable groups;
9. Takes note that the Pakistani Taliban leader Hakimullah Mehsud was killed by a US-operated drone on 4 November 2013 and that the Pakistani Parliament and the new government have formally opposed such interventions; underlines that, under the given circumstances, such drone attacks – which have reportedly killed hundreds of civilians in Pakistan alone – must be considered breaches of international law and should be halted, and that limits to the use of drone attacks should be framed more clearly in international law;
10. Underlines that it is essential to ensure that disaster-risk reduction and disaster preparedness are scaled up and mainstreamed into humanitarian response, increasing beneficiaries' resilience to future disasters; calls on the Commission to continue to promote a coordinated approach and response with existing humanitarian mechanisms at international and local level;
11. Encourages Pakistan to play a constructive role in a region facing serious geopolitical challenges; welcomes the improvement of India-Pakistan relations over the past 12 months and the new visa agreement, which represents an important step towards growing interaction between the two countries, and calls for continued efforts on both sides at reconciliation;
12. Stresses the regional importance of stable Pakistan-Afghanistan relations and calls on Pakistan to normalise its relations with Afghanistan; calls on Pakistan to withdraw its

patronage of the Afghan Taliban, stop giving sanctuary and sustenance to Afghan insurgents and re-establish control in the region bordering Afghanistan, as its long-term national security interests are best served by a peaceful, moderate and prosperous Afghanistan;

13. Notes that the EU is the major export partner for Pakistani goods (22.6 % in 2012); takes the view that EU trade-related support to Pakistan should help promote the diversification and development of production modes, including processing, provide assistance to regional integration and technology transfers, help facilitate the establishment or development of domestic productive capacity, and reduce income inequality;
14. Calls on the Pakistani authorities to take effective steps towards the implementation of the 36 ILO conventions which the country has ratified in order, notably, to allow labour unions to operate, to improve work conditions and safety standards, to eradicate child labour and to combat the most severe forms of exploitation of the some three million female domestic workers;

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	2.12.2013
Result of final vote	+: 20 -: 0 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Ricardo Cortés Lastra, Charles Goerens, Filip Kaczmarek, Gay Mitchell, Norbert Neuser, Bill Newton Dunn, Maurice Ponga, Jean Roatta, Michèle Striffler, Alf Svensson, Keith Taylor, Patrice Tirolien
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Emer Costello, Agustín Díaz de Mera García Consuegra, Fiona Hall, Eduard Kukan, Bart Staes
Substitute(s) under Rule 187(2) present for the final vote	Fabrizio Bertot, Tanja Fajon, Miroslav Mikolášik