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## TEXTS ADOPTED

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### **P9\_TA(2021)0393**

### **Situation in Afghanistan**

### **European Parliament resolution of 16 September 2021 on the situation in Afghanistan (2021/2877(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Afghanistan,
- having regard to the Charter of the United Nations,
- having regard to UN Security Council Resolutions 1368 (2001), 1373 (2001), 2210 (2015), 2344 (2017), 2513 (2020) and 2593 (2021),
- having regard to the EU-Afghanistan Joint Way Forward on migration issues of 2 October 2016,
- having regard to the Cooperation Agreement of 18 February 2017 on Partnership and Development between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, of the other part<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to the joint communication of the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 24 July 2017 entitled ‘Elements for an EU Strategy on Afghanistan (JOIN(2017)0031),
- having regard to the declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union of 17 August 2021 on Afghanistan,
- having regard to the speech of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet at the emergency session of the UN Human Rights Council of 24 August 2021,
- having regard to the G7 Leaders statement of 24 August 2021 on Afghanistan,
- having regard to the statement by the Justice and Home Affairs Council of 31 August 2021 on the situation in Afghanistan,
- having regard to the outcomes of the joint EU, NATO and G7 meeting on Afghanistan,

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 67, 14.3.2017, p. 3.

- having regard to the Taliban’s announcement of the creation of the caretaker government of Afghanistan of 7 September 2021,
  - having regard to the UN international donor conference on Afghanistan on 13 and 14 September 2021 in Geneva,
  - having regard to the statement of 3 September 2021 by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) Josep Borrell at the press conference following the informal meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers (Gymnich),
  - having regard to the completion of the withdrawal from Afghanistan of the United States Armed Forces on 30 August 2021,
  - having regard to the EU Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child, on Children and Armed Conflict, and on Human Rights Defenders,
  - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
  - having regard to the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, signed in Geneva on 28 July 1951, and the 1967 Protocol thereto,
  - having regard to the UN Refugee Convention of 1951,
  - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966,
  - having regard to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1979,
  - having regard to the UN Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the UN Global Compact on Refugees, which followed the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants adopted unanimously by the UN General Assembly on 19 September 2016,
  - having regard to Rule 132(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas while under Taliban rule in the 1990s, Afghanistan was the main safe haven and operational headquarters of international terrorist organisations, in particular al-Qaeda, responsible for numerous barbaric terrorist attacks targeting civilians in Asia, Africa, Australia, Europe and America, and for the deadliest terrorist attack in human history on 11 September 2001 in the United States, in which almost 3 000 people of more than 90 nationalities were killed;
- B. whereas the barbaric attack on the United States 20 years ago triggered UN Security Council Resolution 1368 and led to the US-led intervention in Afghanistan in 2001, which led to the overthrow of the Taliban along with the dismantling and decline of al-Qaeda and other global jihadist organisations, the progress of which is now in grave peril;
- C. whereas after the attacks of 11 September 2001, NATO invoked Article 5 of its founding treaty, the only time NATO has ever invoked its collective defence, with more than 40 countries contributing to the security of the country, and dozens of other states and

organisations, including the EU, engaging in the stabilisation of the country in line with subsequent UN resolutions;

- D. whereas NATO and allied countries have had a presence in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban in 2001; whereas in April 2021, following three years of negotiations with the Taliban, the United States announced a withdrawal of troops to be completed by 11 September 2021; whereas the withdrawal of NATO and allied troops was concluded in August 2021;
- E. whereas the Taliban subsequently rapidly advanced on government-controlled territory; whereas the Afghan army and security forces were unable to mount an effective defence and President Ashraf Ghani fled the country; whereas the Taliban established full control over the country and re-established the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan;
- F. whereas a US-led evacuation of over 110 000 people from Afghanistan took place in August 2021 without coordination by the international community; whereas the United States and the international community managed to airlift to safety over 120 000 at-risk Afghans, local staff of diplomatic missions and military contingents, and foreign nationals within the space of two weeks in August 2021; whereas an estimated 150-170 000 Afghans who worked with the international community over the past two decades have been left behind, their lives in peril;
- G. whereas the Taliban announced the formation of a caretaker government on 7 September 2021 under the leadership of Muhammad Hassan Akhund, Head of the Taliban Leadership Council, to which no women or non-Taliban figures have been invited; whereas the Taliban's caretaker government includes persons responsible for acts of terrorism, including former detainees, individuals under UN sanctions and a person on an FBI most wanted list; whereas many members of the Taliban's caretaker government are holders of passports issued by Pakistan; whereas this government heavily discriminates against the country's ethnic and religious minorities;
- H. whereas the Taliban's caretaker government was formed without keeping the Taliban's promises of an inclusive government; whereas the Ministry of Women's Affairs has been dismantled; whereas the Taliban do not envisage continuous participation of women in leadership roles in Afghanistan, are persecuting women leaders, officials and activists, and are using lethal force to disperse women's rights protests; whereas there is a well-founded fear that the Law on Elimination of Violence Against Women, which imposes criminal penalties for child and forced marriages, domestic violence and numerous other abuses against women, will be repealed;
- I. whereas the Taliban's caretaker government has issued a countrywide ban on protests and has started a crackdown on the free media, including the detention of and assaults on journalists and imposing new restrictions on media work; whereas the Taliban use propaganda to spread hatred towards the West and the EU;
- J. whereas the human rights situation is rapidly deteriorating; whereas the list of vulnerable and at-risk individuals covers most of the population including women, girls, the LGBTI+ community, ethnic and religious minorities notably Shia Hazaras, members of civil society, academics, journalists, lawyers, judges, artists, and politicians and civil servants from the previous Afghan Government; whereas during armed conflicts women have historically suffered from gender-based violence and sexual violence as a weapon of war;

- K. whereas the Taliban are reportedly targeting individuals for harassment, violence and retribution killings; whereas the majority of women have been prevented from returning to the workplace, universities and schools; whereas protests have erupted in the country in particular against the all-male government and its plans to curtail women's rights and exclude women from public life, including sporting activities; whereas the Taliban have violently repressed the demonstrations and the local resistance, notably in the Panjshir Valley;
- L. whereas the country is facing an unfolding humanitarian catastrophe; whereas there are severe shortages of food, water and medicines; whereas 18,4 million Afghans need humanitarian support, including 14 million who were already food insecure; whereas the Commission has announced an increase of humanitarian aid to over EUR 200 million for those inside the country and those fleeing;
- M. whereas the crisis in Afghanistan is first and foremost a tragedy for the Afghan people, but is also putting the EU's own security at risk; whereas the EU should draw the requisite conclusions from this collective failure and prepare for its consequences for our security, including a possible increased threat of terrorism; whereas jihadists around the world feel emboldened by the Taliban's takeover;
- N. whereas Afghans have been fleeing their country for years and have sought refuge primarily in neighbouring countries, but also in Europe; whereas an increase in the number of Afghans migrating to Europe might take place;
- O. whereas the Commission has neither coordinated the evacuation efforts involving European nationals and Afghan citizens working for the EU and its Member States, nor has it been able to set up a genuine European airlift; whereas the evacuation of EU nationals and Afghans at risk who wish to flee is not over and requires unity between the EU and its Member States, including a communication channel with the Taliban;
- P. whereas communication with the Taliban should by no means lead to the removal of the existing sanctions against its members;
- Q. whereas Kabul International Airport is partially operational again, but Afghanistan's land borders are heavily guarded with Taliban checkpoints; whereas millions of Afghans remain in the country, unable to leave;
- R. whereas the country remains extremely insecure; whereas the regional Islamic State group ISIS-K claimed responsibility for an airport bombing on 26 August 2021 which killed around 170 people;
- S. whereas the Taliban face internal divisions and opposition from other extremist and hardline groups in Afghanistan; whereas the regime also now has access to military equipment abandoned by Afghan and allied forces; whereas these weapons could easily wind up in the hands of other internationally recognised terrorist groups, such as the Islamic State, al-Qaeda and their affiliates;
- T. whereas Afghanistan is one of the most aid-dependent countries in the world, with approximately more than 18 million people, half of the population, requiring permanent assistance, and one third of the population being food insecure; whereas approximately 600 000 Afghans have been internally displaced in 2021 alone, 80 % of whom are women

and children; whereas in total, an estimated 5 million Afghans have been internally displaced within Afghanistan and an estimated 2.2 million Afghan refugees already live in neighbouring countries; whereas the disbursement of humanitarian aid is severely hampered by Taliban control;

- U. whereas 760 000 Afghans have returned from Iran and Pakistan in 2021 so far, which has strained the capacity of existing services and caused concerns about their reintegration and living conditions; whereas the Commission has announced an increase of humanitarian aid to over EUR 200 million for those inside the country and those fleeing;
  - V. whereas demonstrable progress in the rights of women and girls has been made in Afghanistan since 2001, including access to education, healthcare and participation in civic and political life; whereas these improvements are arguably the most successful achievements in the country's recent development; whereas this partial progress is now under serious threat due to the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan;
  - W. whereas the Taliban are seeking international recognition, legitimacy and support and have publically declared that they will allow women freedom within Islamic law, which is contradicted by increasing reports of restrictive practices being introduced around Afghanistan and attacks on women, academics, human rights defenders, media workers and civil servants; whereas there are reports of the Taliban tracking individuals who served the previous authorities and then carrying out revenge killings;
  - X. whereas more than 75 % of the Afghan state's budget and more than 95 % of its military budget came from the international community;
  - Y. whereas the recent surge of the COVID-19 pandemic in the country, the lack of vaccines and medical supplies, the drought and the upcoming winter are circumstances likely to even further exacerbate the current socio-economic and humanitarian crisis; whereas the logistical and security situation is further hindered by the COVID-19 pandemic;
1. Deplores the violent takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban and refuses to recognise their current government; expresses its strong concerns about the future of Afghanistan now that the Taliban have taken over the country and are imposing radical sharia law, depriving the Afghan people of the basic rights and freedoms they have enjoyed over the past 20 years; expresses its deepest condolences and support to the victims of ongoing violations and terror attacks, and to their families;
  2. Expresses its sincerest condolences to the families and friends of the service members and civilians that have lost their lives over the past 20 years in Afghanistan;
  3. Expresses its profound and sincere solidarity with Afghans who have fled the country and those who remain; reiterates that this is first and foremost a humanitarian and human rights crisis in which the safety, security and rights of Afghans must be prioritised at all times;
  4. Is deeply concerned about the unfolding humanitarian, economic and refugee crisis in Afghanistan; considers that the safe, peaceful and democratic future of Afghanistan requires an inclusive negotiated political settlement; reiterates its continued commitment to an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process and post-conflict reconstruction as the only credible path to inclusive, long-term peace, security and development;

5. Regrets that the political process and military planning leading to the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan was undertaken unilaterally and without sufficient coordination with NATO allies; regrets that during the rescue operation in Kabul, no cooperation or coordination among EU Member States took place, especially with regard to the communication with the US, which led to most embassies being caught by surprise by the Taliban's takeover of Kabul; believes that more coordination would have helped to avoid the ensuing chaos and desperation and would have resulted in more efficient procedures to allow those who were entitled to be rescued to reach the airport in a more orderly and predictable way;
6. Deplores the lack of communication between the US and European countries and calls on the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the Commission to critically evaluate the process and present this evaluation to the European Parliament by the end of this year;
7. Expresses its gratitude for the bravery of all servicewomen and servicemen, men and women in uniform, humanitarian aid and development personnel, diplomats and local staff who worked, and in part still work, in Afghanistan; praises the significant sacrifice made for a more peaceful and secure Afghanistan over the last two decades;
8. Expresses strong disappointment at the rapid collapse of Afghanistan's state structures, which were not able or willing to withstand the Taliban offensive, which took 10 days, from when they took over the first provincial capital to when they entered Kabul; expresses its disappointment at the failed leadership of President Ashraf Ghani and his decision to flee Afghanistan; demands an investigation into allegations of possible misappropriation of funds from the Afghan budget by President Ghani and other members of the political elite;

#### ***A call to end the violence***

9. Is appalled by reported violations including executions of civilians and members of the Afghan national security forces, recruitment of child soldiers, repression of peaceful protest and expressions of dissent and restrictions of human rights especially targeting women and girls, human rights defenders, LGBTI+ people, religious and ethnic minorities, journalists, writers, academics and artists; urges the Taliban to end these practices immediately and to safeguard, in particular, Afghan women's rights to education, work, sport, free movement, assembly and association, inter alia;
10. Highlights the need for documentation, transparent and prompt investigations of reports of all violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law, and to hold those responsible to account; supports the use of the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime (the EU Magnitsky Act) in this regard; expects Member States to ensure the adoption of a resolution to establish a fact-finding mission to Afghanistan with a robust mandate as a matter of priority at the upcoming 48th regular session of the UN Human Rights Council;
11. Calls on the EEAS and the Member States to ensure the adoption of a UN Security Council resolution for the renewal of the UN mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA), which expires on 17 September 2021;

#### ***Enhanced coordination of evacuation efforts***

12. Calls on the EU and its Member States to work together to facilitate the further evacuation of EU citizens and Afghans at risk, notably through the use of available safe corridors; recalls that the EU expects the Taliban to facilitate this; reiterates the need to focus in this regard on groups of women that are at particular risk, including all women and girls, human rights defenders, LGBTI+ people, religious and ethnic minorities, journalists, writers, academics, local staff and artists, among others;
13. Asks the Commission and the EEAS to devise and implement existing and future protection schemes in coordination with the Member States and to define the envisaged protection measures in the light of possible future emergencies that necessitate these measures; believes that the category of local staff should include all staff that have worked for the EU or EU-funded projects;

#### ***Continued support for Afghan women and girls***

14. Expresses solidarity with the women and human rights defenders protesting around Afghanistan against the Taliban takeover of the country and who want to live in a free, stable, peaceful and diverse society;
15. Deeply regrets the fact that 20 years of progress in the rights of women and girls and gender equality is now under severe threat; reiterates its position that this progress must be carefully safeguarded and monitored; stresses that the right to education and employment, freedom from gender-based violence, the protection of fundamental rights, access to healthcare and full participation in decision-making in local and national political, public and civic life must be key demands of the international community in dialogue with the Taliban;
16. Underscores the need to ensure that women and young people who have left Afghanistan can continue their education in other countries; encourages the development of innovative ways to continue empowering Afghan women and young people, particularly by providing scholarships to study at European schools and universities;

#### ***Deep concern about the Taliban's de facto government***

17. Expresses grave concern about the appointments in the all-male interim government consisting of 33 mullahs, with many under US and UN sanctions and wanted for terrorist activities; notes with the utmost concern the appointment as Minister of Interior of Sirajuddin Haqqani, whose links with terrorist activities have been extensively documented, and the presence of several individuals under UN sanctions in the de facto Taliban government;
18. Calls for the establishment of a representative and elected government in which women and minority groups can meaningfully participate; recalls that the long-term development of Afghanistan will depend on accountability, good governance, the sustainable provision of human security, including the reduction of poverty and the creation of job opportunities, access to social and health services, education, and the protection of fundamental freedoms and human rights;
19. Emphasises its long-term support for credible, free, fair and transparent elections, in line with international standards, and expresses its support for election observations in the country;

***Operational engagement necessary, but no official recognition of the de facto government***

20. Acknowledges that operational engagement with the Taliban's new de facto government is needed for logistical, operational and humanitarian matters in order to provide humanitarian assistance to civilians in need and safe passage for foreign nationals and Afghans seeking to leave the country; points out that these contacts should remain strictly limited to the relevant purposes at this stage; emphasises that the conditions have not been met for the political recognition of the de facto Taliban rulers who have assumed power by military means and are currently destroying the achievements of the last 20 years;
21. Recalls that for the EU, a critical litmus test of any kind of relationship with the Taliban will be the preservation of the achievements of the last 20 years, particularly in the area of women's rights and girls' education, and making sure that Afghanistan does not descend into being a safe haven for jihadi and other terrorist groups launching or masterminding terrorist attacks from its territory; recalls that the Taliban will be judged by the international community on the basis of their actions on the ground, not by public declarations;
22. Urges the Commission to swiftly launch an investigation pursuant to Article 19(1)(a) of the GSP Regulation<sup>1</sup> with a view to suspending the trade preferences that Afghanistan has under the Everything But Arms scheme;
23. Notes the importance of the resumption of an EU presence on the ground when security and political conditions permit;
24. Calls for the organisation of an EU institutions mission to Kabul when circumstances allow, in order for its participants to familiarise themselves with the humanitarian, migration, economic, and security situation and the state of women's and minorities' rights in Afghanistan;

***Ensuring that Afghanistan will not become a new bulwark of terrorist organisations***

25. Condemns in the strongest terms the deadly terrorist attack of 26 August 2021 perpetrated by ISIS-K at the Abbey Gate of Kabul International Airport and the Baron Hotel, which claimed the lives of more than 170 people, including 13 US service personnel, and injured more than 200;
26. Insists that the Taliban and the Government of the Islamic Republic must fulfil their counterterrorism commitments, including preventing al-Qaeda, Daesh or other terrorist groups and individuals from using Afghan soil to threaten or violate the security of any other country, not hosting members of these groups, and preventing them from recruiting, training or fundraising; warns that the failure to crack down on these groups will lead to international sanctions and the isolation of the Taliban;
27. Urges the Member States to preserve and share whatever intelligence was gained through their military and law enforcement presence in Afghanistan, with a particular emphasis on biometric data that is critical in assisting Member States and third countries in identifying any returning foreign fighters; underscores the fact that combating the financing of

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EU) No 978/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 applying a scheme of generalised tariff preferences (OJ L 303, 31.10.2012, p. 1).

terrorism is key to creating an environment conducive to security in Afghanistan; urges all relevant partners to enhance their efforts at dismantling all terrorist financing networks; stresses that the imminent terrorist threat in Afghanistan as a result of the Taliban takeover must be prominently addressed in the EU's Strategic Compass, which will outline the military threats faced by the EU and its ambitions for the coming years; urges European intelligence services to increase the sharing of regularly updated threat analyses in order to enhance intelligence sharing and institutional cooperation;

28. Recalls that the production and trade of opium is a significant source of income for the Taliban, the impact of which goes far beyond Afghan borders; expresses concern at the imminent risk that the instability in the country will increase the illicit drugs trade, as well as the flow of arms, money laundering and terrorist financing;
29. Calls for thorough registration and security checks on those being evacuated from the region and an enhanced exchange of information between the Member States' law enforcement authorities, the US and Europol to prevent possible security threats stemming from terrorism and organised crime;
30. Condemns irreparable damages of the cultural sites made by the Taliban and their affiliates and remains cautious that the instability will lead to an increase of international smuggling and theft of cultural heritage that could be used to finance enhanced activity by terror organisations in the region; urges the digitisation of Afghan cultural artefacts to be carried out in Europe in order to support the detection of smuggled goods, and calls for a comprehensive temporary ban against the import of cultural goods from Afghanistan be implemented so as to deprive the Taliban and their affiliates of the potential to profit from cultural smuggling;

#### ***Further increasing humanitarian aid***

31. Praises the work of international organisations and local and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), which provide services, assistance and relief to the Afghan people despite the security risks; calls on the Taliban to ensure the safety of local and international civil society organisations, NGOs and humanitarian organisations, including their female staff, which is essential for providing critical services to Afghan women and girls; stresses that these women humanitarian aid workers must be able to work freely and without fear of retaliation;
32. Calls for humanitarian assistance to be stepped up further and coordinated with UN agencies and NGOs, including the creation of humanitarian corridors for the provision of food aid, water, sanitation and medication; welcomes the Commission's decision to increase humanitarian support for Afghanistan from over EUR 50 million to more than EUR 200 million; welcomes the international community's recent EUR 1 billion pledge for the people of Afghanistan and calls on the Commission to lead advocacy efforts to ensure that the needs of humanitarian support are fully met;
33. Reiterates that the immediate needs of Afghan women and girls, in particular those who are displaced, need to be prioritised in the context of humanitarian aid; highlights the fact that it is crucial to mitigate vulnerability to gender-based violence and ensure access to healthcare and basic hygiene supplies;

34. Insists on continued direct EU support for Afghan politicians and civil society activists committed to human rights and fundamental values, many of whom are now in exile, so that they can continue to work to preserve the achievements of the last 20 years and to pursue reforms in Afghanistan;
35. Emphasises that European financial support via the authorities is conditional on preserving and building upon the achievements of the past 20 years, especially the rights of women and girls; insists that the Taliban must demonstrate respect for and a commitment to safeguarding these achievements, which they have not done so far; stresses that the EU should make sure that humanitarian assistance to Afghan civilians in need is channelled through the relevant international organisations and NGOs, and should insist that the Taliban must ensure safe and unhindered access to local and international NGOs; underscores that the Taliban must not hinder the delivery and disbursement of humanitarian aid to all those in need;
36. Calls on the Commission to examine all ongoing development projects in the country in order to try to assess which of them can still continue with local partners or NGOs and international organisations without interference from the Taliban regime, with the participation of women, security guarantees for development aid workers, and effective safeguards against corruption as conditions;

***The EU must develop a response to a potential migration and refugee crisis***

37. Stresses the fundamental right of Afghans to seek safety; urges all steps to be taken to resume coordinated evacuations from the country under the auspices of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), notably through the creation of safe corridors and the permanent reopening of Kabul International Airport and Afghanistan's land borders; calls for specific support for women, girls and people at risk wanting to leave the country, in order to ensure safe routes;
38. Stresses that the largest proportion of Afghan refugees will seek protection in neighbouring countries first and foremost, and that the EU should therefore plan to provide additional support to Afghanistan's neighbouring refugee-hosting countries, preferably via the UN and its agencies, as well as international organisations on the ground;
39. Recalls that financial, logistical and capacity-building support for the reception of Afghan refugees and migrants in neighbouring countries is not an alternative to a fully-fledged European asylum and migration policy; believes that the EU must urgently conclude and implement its New Pact on Asylum and Migration so as to be able to deal with migration flows in a more effective and humane manner;
40. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure a coordinated European effort to pursue a humane asylum policy in which the EU shoulders its moral responsibility in reception and integration in full compliance with the 1951 Geneva Convention; welcomes the planned September Resettlement Forum; stresses that the EU's policy should include, as a matter of priority, an expansion of resettlement for those who are most at risk and most vulnerable, as well as further complementary pathways, such as humanitarian visas and a special visa programme for Afghan women seeking protection from the Taliban regime; urges the Member States to reassess current and recent asylum applications,

including rejected applications, in the light of recent developments; underlines that there must be no forced returns to Afghanistan under any circumstances;

41. Calls on the Council to utilise available tools such as the Temporary Protection Directive<sup>1</sup> and Civil Protection Mechanism to maximise efforts across the EU to ensure better coordination among Member States and immediate access to protection; reiterates its call on the Commission to publish a legislative proposal for humanitarian visas and calls for equal responsibility-sharing among the Member States;
42. Calls for enhanced cooperation and support for non-EU countries to help them to combat criminal networks that engage in migrant smuggling and human trafficking; calls on Europol to provide criminal risk analysis and enhanced cooperation with third countries in the broader context of the developments in Afghanistan;
43. Calls on the Commission to reflect this resolution in the programming of the NDICI-Global Europe instrument and the preparation of the relevant multiannual indicative programmes;

***More cooperation needed with countries in the region around Afghanistan, while upholding fundamental human rights and the rule of law***

44. Recognises that the current situation in Afghanistan is not conducive to regional stability; underscores that the West's withdrawal from Afghanistan has created a void that is resulting in increased instability; highlights that more responsibility now lies with neighbouring and regional powers for the situation in Afghanistan, which need to prevent any outpour of instability beyond the borders of the country; reaffirms the need for the EU to strengthen cooperation with Central Asian countries in this regard, in particular Uzbekistan, with which the EU is currently negotiating an Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, as well as Tajikistan; stresses that this cooperation should not undermine the EU's defence of fundamental values and the rule of law;
45. Expresses its concern about the safety of Afghan nationals at high risk and those crossing to neighbouring countries over land borders, in particular to Pakistan; regrets the lack of coordination by the international community in this respect and urges the Member States to exploit all possible diplomatic leverage and tools to ensure access to land borders, safe passage and access to diplomatic facilities; stresses the critical coordination role of EU delegations in neighbouring countries in providing practical support in this regard;
46. Recalls that for many years Pakistan provided safe havens for Taliban members, as well as assistance to their security forces; instructs the EEAS to convey to Pakistan's leadership that it bears responsibility for security and stability in Afghanistan and that it must use its influence on the Taliban to achieve those aims, and to consider if there is reason to immediately review Pakistan's eligibility for GSP+ status and the benefits that come with it in the light of current events;
47. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to provide Afghanistan and its neighbouring countries with immediate support for asylum capacity-building, with the

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<sup>1</sup> Council Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001 on minimum standards for giving temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons and on measures promoting a balance of efforts between Member States in receiving such persons and bearing the consequences thereof (OJ L 212, 7.8.2001, p. 12).

assistance of the European Asylum Support Organisation, and humanitarian aid for the most vulnerable in order to stabilise the region and prevent another migration crisis;

48. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to immediately increase support to countries neighbouring Afghanistan that are hosting large numbers of migrants and refugees, to ensure that people in need of protection get a safe reception and sustainable living conditions;

***A wake-up call for the European Union – necessary reforms***

49. Is cognisant of the fact that the withdrawal of US and international forces from Afghanistan is a manifestation of a collective failure of Western foreign and security policy and strategy, with possible long-term detrimental consequences; considers that in the short term it will damage the credibility of the West, create a crisis of confidence and require serious lessons to be drawn from this experience for the future, in particular when it comes to deciding on the nature and mandate of military interventions;
50. Expresses its deep frustration and concern at the ineffectiveness of the US, NATO, the EEAS and the European Union institutions as a whole over a 20-year period in maintaining and funding the Ghani government, in reality corrupt and alien to the people, as well as armed forces that have proven to be ineffective; expresses its concern at the fact that our collective failure in Afghanistan means a strategic advantage for non-Western powers and neighbouring countries, notably Pakistan, as well as China and, to a lesser extent, Russia, without their having provided significant support to and been involved in the development of Afghanistan; recalls that the Afghan authorities were embroiled in political infighting and systemic corruption and were not able to overcome weak governance;
51. Emphasises the importance of good governance, the rule of law and the fight against corruption, on which not enough progress had been achieved in Afghanistan in the context of the war on terror in the country; believes that for the success of state building and the EU's international human rights agenda, the EU needs to pursue an integrated approach of foreign, humanitarian, development, human rights, security, gender equality and trade policies; urges the Council, the EEAS and the Commission to prepare and present to Parliament, as soon as possible, a comprehensive lesson-based strategy as regards Afghanistan and the countries in the surrounding region;
52. Believes that this crisis proves the need for the EU to reinforce significantly its capacity to act autonomously and thus strengthen EU defence cooperation by building a genuine European Defence Union, which should go hand in hand with the strengthening of the European pillar of NATO; believes that the EU must invest in military awareness, surveillance and reconnaissance, intelligence and strategic airlift; recalls that the inability of European forces to secure an international airport such as that of Kabul without US support is a striking example of the amount of investment that will be required; welcomes the recent reflections made by the High Representative in this regard, and reiterates its support for fundamental and comprehensive dialogue between EU institutions, EU Member States, national parliaments, European partners and civil society on the way forward;
53. Believes that EU foreign affairs issues should be decided by an extended use of qualified majority following the EU treaties;

54. Calls on the EEAS to strengthen the EU's diplomatic representation in Central Asia, in particular in Tajikistan, in order to be able to receive first-hand information about developments on the ground; insists that the situation in Afghanistan, especially concerning women and girls, ethnic, religious and other vulnerable groups, continue to be assessed and evaluated in the coming weeks and months;
55. Recognises the importance of close cooperation with the US focused on addressing multiple challenges and providing humanitarian support for the Afghan people, while taking into account the lessons learned in Afghanistan; expresses appreciation to the US military for their support with the evacuation from Kabul International Airport and expresses its deepest condolences to the families of the troops who died in the process;
56. Calls on the EU and the Member States to ensure effective protection of the EU's external borders in full compliance with EU law and fundamental rights in order to better prepare for migration movements from the region and unauthorised entries into the EU;

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57. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the EU Special Envoy to Afghanistan, the national parliaments of the Member States, and the US Congress.