



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



## **Council conclusions on Afghanistan**

*3124th FOREIGN AFFAIRS Council meeting  
Brussels, 14 November 2011*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The international engagement in Afghanistan is evolving from its focus on security and stabilization towards political and economic cooperation. After 2014, a fully sovereign Afghanistan will exercise complete responsibility for its own security and will strive to transform itself into a stable and responsible member of the international community, in the service of all its people and in full respect of agreed international commitments. To ensure the successful completion of these processes the international community will need to continue supporting Afghanistan on its path from Transition to Transformation.
2. In this context, the Council looks forward to President Karzai's formal announcement of the second tranche of provinces, districts and cities where full responsibility for security will be transferred to the Afghan authorities, as part of the transition process. Nearly 50% of the people of Afghanistan live in areas which have been or are expected to be transitioned.
3. The International Afghanistan Conference will be held in Bonn under the chairmanship of Afghanistan on 5 December 2011. The Council fully subscribes to the aims of the Conference, and in particular that of mobilizing the international community to stay engaged in Afghanistan in the long term. Therefore, the Council reiterates the EU's firm commitment to remain engaged, as a strong and reliable partner to the Afghan government and people, also after transition has been completed.
4. The Council also expects the Bonn Conference to lay emphasis on the further strengthening of Afghan institutions of governance. It is of the view that if the democratic structures the EU has helped to build are to develop and work in a sustainable way they need to have the full support of the Afghan people, many of whom turned out to vote in the 2009 and 2010 elections in the face of intimidation, threats and doubts about the integrity of the process.

# **P R E S S**

5. At the same time, Afghanistan needs to show tangible results in the implementation of the Kabul Conference commitments in particular in the fields of governance and respect for human rights and the rule of law and as concerns the accountable management of public funds. In taking stock of civilian aspects of transition, the Bonn Conference should accordingly send a clear message of support while urging the Afghan authorities to show strong leadership and commitment and to make rapid progress in these crucial domains.
6. Therefore during the transition process leading up to 2014, the EU will, further to its Conclusions of 18 July 2011 and to the EU Action Plan of October 2009, reiterate at Bonn its readiness to support Afghanistan, as appropriate in coordination and cooperation with the UN and NATO and other relevant international bodies, inter alia through:
  - encouraging better oversight by elected bodies at both national and subnational levels, in particular as regards the flows and use of public finances;
  - in this context, assisting Afghanistan to ensure that provincial and national institutions function together effectively and transparently;
  - reinforcing the role of the parliament, the judiciary and audit authorities;
  - promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, with a particular attention to the rights of women;
  - stepping up its assistance for capacity building, inter alia in the fields of subnational governance, civil service, civilian policing, the justice sector and electoral reform;
  - The Council agreed to an extension in principle of the mandate of EUPOL Afghanistan until the end of 2014. The Council also expressed the EU's commitment beyond 2014 to support Afghan efforts in strengthening policing and the rule of law.
  - continuing its development cooperation with Afghanistan in order to foster economic and social progress and combat poverty.

The Council stressed the importance of adequate security for EU presence in Afghanistan and the role of the Afghan authorities in this regard, including as concerns EUPOL.

7. The Council reiterates that as part of its work on the rule of law, the EU intends to give attention to assisting Afghanistan to improve the legal framework for private sector activities and in particular direct investment, with a view to improving the overall investment climate, thereby reducing as far as possible political risk, so promoting the conditions for sustainable economic growth.
8. The Council has adopted a decision authorising the European Commission and the High Representative to negotiate a Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development with Afghanistan. The mandate specifically refers to cooperation in the fields referred to above as well as a range of areas including development, counter-terrorism, counter-narcotics, combating international crime, migration, trade, the environment, including climate change, and economic and cultural cooperation. For the first time the Agreement will create a coherent, legally binding overall framework for the EU's relations with Afghanistan, setting out common values as well as mutual rights and obligations, so constituting a long-term commitment to cooperation with Afghanistan up to and beyond 2014
9. In the context of the abovementioned principles, the EU will seek to maintain funding for its cooperation and assistance programmes to Afghanistan and the region, bilaterally as well as through the EU's budget, at least at current levels in the years to come.

10. The EU reiterates its support for Afghan-led reconciliation and reintegration in accordance with the conditions set out in the Council Conclusions of 18 July 2011.
  11. The EU notes that the Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Heart of Asia, held at Istanbul on 2 November 2011, has, by launching the Istanbul Process, laid a useful basis for a process of political cooperation in Afghanistan's neighbourhood, owned and led by the countries of the region. The EU welcomes the follow-up action agreed at Istanbul, including the Confidence Building Measures proposed there and technical meetings which will prepare the Kabul ministerial meeting in 2012. All countries in the region need to participate in efforts to achieve a peaceful solution to the conflict in Afghanistan, thus allowing the international community's long-term commitment to Afghanistan's development to be successfully implemented. The EU considers that, fundamentally, it is in the interests of each country in the region to contribute to stability in Afghanistan.
  12. The EU and its Member States therefore stand ready to facilitate any initiatives aimed at reconciling the legitimate interests of Afghanistan's neighbours, through active diplomacy. The Council reiterates that it is vital that all countries in the region and beyond accept that Afghanistan must be allowed to seek the way to peace without outside interference. The EU is ready, should the Government of Afghanistan so wish, to provide any practical assistance in furthering regional cooperation.
  13. In the course of the bilateral or multilateral discussions following the Istanbul conference, all countries of the region should also be encouraged to open up trade, transit and investment possibilities for Afghanistan, and, through Afghanistan, for each other. International standards and criteria should as far as possible provide a basis for this. Relevant international bodies such as WTO, WCO, ICAO and others could play a very useful role in following up.
  14. The Council considers that the UN can play a central role in supporting any commitments entered into by the countries in the region in all these areas."
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