

EU 27 WRITTEN STATEMENT

United Nations Security Council Arria Formula Meeting on the Peace Process in Afghanistan

20/11/2020

The following statement is on behalf of the EU and its 27 Member States. The Candidate Countries Turkey, the Republic of North Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia* and Albania*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

A peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan free of terrorism is not only essential for its own stability and development, but also for that of the entire region and beyond. A negotiated political settlement leading to peace must result from an inclusive Afghan-owned and Afghan-led peace process. The peace process should be built on the democratic and human rights achievements made by the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan since 2001 and take into account the full implementation of human rights provisions of the Afghan Constitution and international treaties to which Afghanistan is a State party, including on women's rights.

The political process should strengthen the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, constitutional order and national unity of Afghanistan. To offer peace the best chance to last, the peace process must be representative. Women's meaningful participation at all stages; and the voice of all Afghans, including persons belonging to minorities or vulnerable groups, as well as the Civil society, must be genuinely ensured and their rights protected. The EU notes in particular Afghanistan's commitment to enhancing women's meaningful participation in the peace process in its National Action Plan on the implementation of UNSC 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. The Intra-Afghan negotiations must lead to a fair democratic process and therefore reinforce the fundamental rights and freedoms of all Afghans.

The EU and its Member States remain concerned with and condemn the unacceptable levels of violence in Afghanistan, which have continued, and increased, even after the Doha Agreement and the beginning of the intra-Afghan direct negotiations. The EU's position remains clear and unchanged: An immediate, permanent and comprehensive ceasefire is need to accompany the peace negotiations and to create a conducive environment for sustainable peace in the country as well as stability in the region. There should be no more conditions to a cease of hostilities when the time is now for genuine commitments to peace to be demonstrated.

The EU and its Member States want to recall their full support to UN Security Council Resolutions and the UN Secretary General's Call for a Global Ceasefire on 23 March 2020, which so far have gone unheeded. The delivery of the humanitarian aid on the ground as well as development

* *The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.*

cooperation activities are being obstructed by the current security situation over the country, and the dramatic context of the continued spread of the pandemic and the lack of health care system in Afghanistan makes an immediate ceasefire even more urgent and critical. The Afghan people have already suffered long enough the consequences of war and violence in their country. Fire must cease so that a genuine and lasting political solution to the conflict can be found in a sustainable way.

The EU and its Member states, together with the UN and the international community, have demonstrated their commitment to remain engaged in supporting the process and ensuring the best conditions for achieving a sustainable political settlement.

The Afghan government has proven so far its readiness to start the talks, and we now expect the Taliban to demonstrate their willingness for peace, by entering into negotiations through dialogue and accepting a genuine cease-fire the people of Afghanistan deserve. Lasting peace cannot come at any cost and must not be made out of impunity.

The unanimous adoption by the United Nations Security Council on 10 March 2020 of the Resolution 2513, which the EU fully supports, goes in this direction. The message given by the Security Council was clear: The international community is ready to constructively support the start of intra-Afghan negotiations toward a lasting peace in Afghanistan, but commitments have to be met and sanctions will not automatically be softened or lifted, it will be correlated to their genuine commitment for peace.

The EU's sustained support for peace and development in Afghanistan will not be unconditional but assessed against political progress and the commitment of the parties to the conflict to a meaningful peace process. The European contribution will be rooted in our transparent, democratic principled-approach, including safeguarding human rights and fundamental liberties of all Afghans, including women, youth, minority groups as well as victims of war have to be preserved and further promoted.

The EU also expects strong structural reforms to be carried out, especially to reinforce rule of law, promote good governance, and better fight corruption, illegal immigration and drug trafficking as well as further enhancing cooperation regarding readmission. Financial support remains above all a political commitment. We recall that the EU together with UNAMA and international partners have been mobilising significant resources supporting the government in its fight against corruption. It is an essential step to assure donors that funds are being used efficiently appropriately. To see reforms fade or fail now would also mean a loss of these investments and a loss of Afghanistan's credibility. Therefore, the EU, its Members States, together with its international partners will carefully follow the progress made. Implementation and monitoring mechanisms will be established.

The 2020 Afghanistan Conference in Geneva next week (23-24 November) will constitute an important opportunity for the EU and the international community to reaffirm their continuous support and determination to promote a peaceful, democratic, sovereign and prosperous country, deserved and long awaited by the people of Afghanistan. The EU reiterates its full support to the Government of Afghanistan, Finland and the UN in organizing the conference. It will be an occasion to give a positive political impetus to the peace process and express our solidarity towards the Afghan people through our pledge of financial support.

The EU will also make it clear: Peace should not be achieved compromising the future of Afghanistan. Our support will aim to promote an inclusive Afghan-owned and Afghan-led peace process that builds on political and social achievements of the last 19 years, which is the only way toward a sustainable peace, development and prosperity in the country and the region. To that end, the EU and its Member States, jointly with the United Kingdom, Norway, the United States, Australia, Canada, Japan, together representing about 80% of all Official development and humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, will give in Geneva to all parties a clear expression of political and governance conditions on which will be anchored our future international political and financial support to Afghanistan. We have formally agreed on a joint line of these conditions and rendered them public on 17 November 2020 as “*Key elements for sustained international support to Peace and Development in Afghanistan*”.

We call upon all nations and international institutions, which are dedicated in promoting stability and prosperity for Afghanistan and the region, to join our principles-based approach and contribute to create the right conditions for lasting peace in Afghanistan.