



EUROPEAN UNION

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EU Statement on Supporting Stability in the OSCE Area during the Ongoing Transitions in Afghanistan

The EU welcomes the fact that, for the second year in a row, the ASRC dedicates a working session to Afghanistan. This demonstrates the continuing importance of Afghanistan for the OSCE area. We want to thank Mr. James Appathurai and Ms. Shukria Barakzai for their contributions to this session.

On 14 June, the second round of the Afghan presidential elections was conducted. The final results are expected to be announced shortly. The upcoming change of leadership will be a key moment in the country's ongoing transformation process, providing an opportunity to enhance long-term security and stability for Afghanistan, as well as for the region as a whole.

The EU has made an exceptional commitment to Afghanistan over the past twelve years and remains committed for the long-term. In that context, we would welcome the early finalisation of the Cooperation Agreement for Partnership and Development (CAPD). The EU Strategy 2014-2016 focuses on promoting peace, security and regional stability; reinforcing democracy; encouraging economic and human development; and fostering the rule of law and human rights.

We call on the incoming president to reach out to all Afghans and neighbouring countries to invite them to contribute to the development of a stable, prosperous and fully sovereign Afghanistan, including through intensifying engagement in the Heart of Asia process. The EU considers security to be one of the most urgent challenges for a new government. In that respect, early conclusion of the Bilateral Security Agreement with the United States and the Status of Forces Agreement with NATO remains vital to ensuring a security environment conducive to economic growth and ongoing international support.

With regard to the further development of the Afghan National Security Forces, the EU focuses on the professionalisation of civilian policing, in close coordination with the Afghan authorities and international partners, building on the results from the ongoing EUPOL mission and with substantial support provided under the EU Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) as well as Member States' activities. The EU will use its engagement and instruments also to enhance political and economic cooperation between Afghanistan and its neighbours, to support the regional solution strategy for the reintegration of Afghan refugees, and to strengthen Afghan and regional efforts to reduce organised crime and drugs production, trafficking and demand.

The security of Afghanistan is indivisible from sustainable security in the whole region of Central Asia. We therefore support regional cooperation in Central Asia. The Heart of Asia process, advancing Confidence Building Measures and enhancing trust in the Central Asia region, represents a sound example of such cooperation: both the EU and the OSCE have become part of this process. We restate our strong commitment to the region through the EU's Border Management Programme in Central Asia (BOMCA) and Border Management in Northern Afghanistan (BOMNAF). We welcome the active participation of Afghan officials in the activities of the OSCE Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe, in the Patrol Programming and Leadership Project run by the OSCE office in Dushanbe, the upcoming border management project in Turkmenistan, which will also include Afghan officials, as well as the courses offered to Afghan staff at the Domodedovo Academy in Moscow. We also would like to mention the important work done by the OSCE Bishkek Academy on Afghanistan and the participation of Afghan students in the Academy's programmes.

The EU encourages all participating States to consider contributing according to the relevant Ministerial Council Decisions taken in Madrid and Vilnius to the implementation of these activities and calls on the Secretariat, in close cooperation with the relevant field presences in Central Asia, to continue to identify and develop meaningful OSCE extra-budgetary projects to promote our common objectives.

The Candidate Countries TURKEY, the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ICELAND+ and SERBIA*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidates ALBANIA and BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA and ARMENIA align themselves with this statement.

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

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.