

Parlamento Europeo Giovani

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In light of the recent events surrounding the withdrawal of the United States of America from Afghanistan, what strategy should the European Union adopt with regards to a common foreign and security policy while also attempting to prevent the next humanitarian crisis?

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The European Youth Parliament,

- A. Considering the impossibility of having formal diplomatic relations with a state without recognising its government¹,
- B. Aware of the fact that the Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development (CAPD)² might not be valuable anymore after the Afghan Republic³ has ceased to exist,
- C. Acknowledging that Afghanistan is one of the world's poorest countries, with the EU being a major contributor to its economy⁴,
- D. Stressing the fact that most of Afghanistan's neighbouring countries are struggling with high migration rates, taking for instance Pakistan, which is hosting over 1.4 million Afghan refugees⁵,
- E. Having examined that EU Member States are adopting different approaches regarding Afghan asylum seekers, in particular the discrepancies concerning the number of immigrants being taken in by each country, for example, in the first half of 2021, Germany had taken in approximately 180,000 refugees whilst Spain only 700⁶,

¹ According to "Recognition of States and Governments" on Law Explores' website, 5th July 2018, "The Varied Legal Consequences of Recognition and Non-Recognition" paragraph: <https://lawexplores.com/recognition-of-states-and-governments/>

² Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development, from the EU law's official website, effective from 1st December 2017: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A22017A0314%2801%29>

³ Considering that there is no evidence that the newly born Taliban government has signed another agreement with the EU.

⁴ According to European Commission on International Partnership in Afghanistan's website, "Afghanistan" and "Our priorities" paragraphs: https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/where-we-work/afghanistan_en

⁵ According to the data from UNHCR's official website, regarding Pakistan, in the first half of 2021: <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/download/?url=XQx21w>

⁶ According to the data from UNHCR's official website, regarding EU Member States, in the first half of 2021: <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/download/?url=yP4PLq>

- F. Emphasising the relevance of the non-refoulement principle, which forbids countries to repatriate refugees, as a fundamental right of the international law⁷,
- G. Realising that the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) gradually started to lose control over Afghan territories⁸, due to the NATO withdrawal⁹, thus meaning the end of the Resolute Support Mission which had the aim “to provide further training, advice and assistance for the Afghan security forces and institutions.”¹⁰,
- H. Appreciating Europol’s¹¹ efforts in combating and preventing issues, such as terrorism and illicit drug trafficking, which pose major threats to the European and International communities, and which could increase as a consequence of the overthrow of the Afghan government¹²,
- I. Recognising that opium production in Afghanistan is accountable for 80% of global opium supply¹³ and it is one of the main contributors of the Taliban’s income¹⁴,
- J. Deeply disturbed by the difficulties Afghan citizens are facing in leaving the country, since:
- i) Taliban are controlling airports and mistreating Afghans who wish to leave the country¹⁵,
 - ii) neighbouring countries have closed off borders for asylum seekers¹⁶,

⁷ As stated by the European Commission’s official website on the definition of non-refoulement: “In the refugee context, a core principle of international refugee law that prohibits States from returning refugees in any manner whatsoever to countries or territories in which their lives or freedom may be threatened on account of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion”: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/pages/glossary/non-refoulement_en

⁸ According to the document “The withdrawal of military forces from Afghanistan and its implications for peace” from the House of Common Library’s official website, 13th August 2021, “Taliban offensive” paragraph: <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9241/CBP-9241.pdf>

⁹ According to the article “NATO Allies decide to start withdrawal of forces from Afghanistan”, from NATO’s official website, 14th April 2021: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_183086.htm

¹⁰ According to the article “Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan (2015-2021)” from NATO’s official website, 13th September 2021: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_113694.htm

¹¹ European Union’s law enforcement agency, that serves as “support centre for law enforcement operations, hub for information on criminal activities, centre for law enforcement expertise.”: <https://www.europol.europa.eu/about-europol>

¹² According to the article “The Taliban in Afghanistan” from the Council on Foreign Relations’ official website, 15th September 2021: <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/taliban-afghanistan#chapter-title-0-3>

¹³ According to the article “Drug market trends” from the World Drug Report of 2021, of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes’ (UNODC) official website, “Cultivation of opium poppy and production of opium“ paragraph: <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/download/?url=yP4PLq>

¹⁴ According to the statement “The Taliban have counted on the Afghan opium trade as one of their main sources of income” from Cesar Gudest, the head of the Kabul office of the UNODC, from Reuters’ official website, 16th August 2021 <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/profits-poppy-afghanistans-illegal-drug-trade-boon-taliban-2021-08-16/>

¹⁵ As testified by Habiba, an Afghan citizen: “They [the Taliban] whipped me three times on my leg with a cable. There were thousands of people and I saw many people being beaten as they were trying to escape”, from Amnesty International’s report “The fate of thousands hanging in the balance: Afghanistan’s fall into the hands of the Taliban”, 3rd September 2021, ”Obstacles to fleeing the country“ paragraph: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/ASA1147272021ENGLISH.pdf>

¹⁶ According to the “The Refugee Brief -3 September 2021” from UNHCR’s official website, 3rd September 2021:

- K. Noting with concern that, despite the Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid's declaration about gender equality¹⁷, women are still facing discriminations in the Afghan society, such as:
- i) 60% of the minors excluded from higher education are girls¹⁸,
 - ii) women are forbidden to exercise professions¹⁹, except within medical field²⁰,
 - iii) women are not provided with essential medical help²¹,
- L. Deeply alarmed by allegations coming from Afghan and US officials about Russia, Pakistan and Iran giving the Taliban financial aid²²,
1. Calls upon the European Commission to acknowledge the interim government of Afghanistan with a De Facto recognition²³, which is provisional and has the condition of respecting human rights;
 2. Encourages the European Commission to renew the CAPD or to establish a new agreement with the same purposes, especially:
 - a) "preventing irregular migration flows",
 - b) "combating terrorism and extremism",
 - c) "ensuring respect for human rights",
 - d) "promoting a sustainable development for the economy"²⁴,

<https://www.unhcr.org/refugeebrief/the-refugee-brief-3-september-2021/>

¹⁷ "Our sisters, our men have the same rights; they will be able to benefit from their rights. They can have activities in different sectors and different areas on the basis of our rules and regulations: educational, health and other areas." speech given on 17th August 2021 by the Taliban Spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/8/17/transcript-of-talibans-first-press-conference-in-kabul>

¹⁸ According to the article "La guerra in Afghanistan e la situazione per le donne e le bambine" from Save the Children's Italian official website, 15th December 2020, "La situazione delle donne e delle bambine in Afghanistan" paragraph:

<https://www.savethechildren.it/blog-notizie/la-guerra-afghanistan-e-la-situazione-le-donne-e-le-bambine>

¹⁹ According to the report "The fate of thousands hanging in the balance: Afghanistan's fall into the hands of the Taliban" from Amnesty International's official website, September 2021: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/ASA1147272021ENGLISH.pdf>

²⁰ According to the statement on Twitter of Taliban's spokesman Suhail Shaheen, "All female employees of the Ministry of Public Health both in provinces and the Capital are informed to resume their jobs on regular manner", 27th August 2021:

<https://twitter.com/suhailshaheen1/status/1431348284287770630?s=20>

²¹ According to the file "Gender alert Women's rights in Afghanistan" from the UN's official website, 2nd December 2021, "Healthcare" paragraph: <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2021-12/Gender-alert-Womens-rights-in-Afghanistan-en.pdf>

²² According to the article "Afghanistan: How do the Taliban make money?", from BBC's official website, 31st August 2021, "Foreign donations" paragraph: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-46554097>

²³ According to the definition of "De Facto recognition" from Oxford Reference's official website:

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095706639>

²⁴ Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development, from the EU law's official website, effective from 1st December

3. Endorses the establishment of a financial task force, included in the European External Action Service (EEAS)²⁵ and made up of qualified economists, to administrate EU funds' distribution in Afghanistan;
4. Encourages the EEAS to strengthen its cooperation with countries which are more afflicted by the migrants influx²⁶, by financing the construction of hosting facilities and relocating part of the refugees to third countries;
5. Approves the initiative of the EU Commission of allocating part of the €1 billion support package to the neighbouring countries²⁷;
6. Urges the European Commission to make a legislative proposal stating that each Member State has to take in a predetermined number of refugees, according to the following parameters, that should be inspected by the European Asylum Support Office (EASO)²⁸:
 - a) unemployment rate,
 - b) population density,
 - c) gross domestic product;
7. Calls upon the European Parliament to initiate the preventive procedure, proposed in Article 7 of the Treaty on EU²⁹, against Member States that breach the non-refoulement principle;
8. Urges the European Parliament to organise a European peacekeeping force to be sent to countries facing political instability such as Afghanistan, following the example of the UN Blue Helmets³⁰, with the purpose of protecting the Afghan population and EU aid workers;
9. Designates a part of the peacekeeping force, mentioned above, to operate as an intelligence service providing information about suspect terrorist activities, and illicit drug trafficking to Europol's analysts;

2017: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A22017A0314%2801%29>

²⁵ The European Union's diplomatic service that helps the EU's foreign affairs chief – the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy – to carry out the Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy:

https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en

²⁶ According to the BBC article "Afghanistan: How many refugees are there and where will they go?" 31st August 2021, "Neighbouring countries took in the highest number of Afghans in 2020": <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-58283177>

²⁷ According to the article "Afghanistan: Commission announces 1€ billion Afghan support package", from European Commission's official website, 12th October 2021: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_5208

²⁸ European office which aim is to ensure that individual asylum cases are dealt within a coherent way by all Member States: <https://www.easo.europa.eu/>

²⁹ Article 7 of the Treaty on EU, from the EU law's official website, effective from 7th June 2016: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A12016M007>

³⁰ UN peacekeeping army, "We work alongside UN Police and civilian colleagues to promote stability, security, and peace processes; we protect personnel and property; we work with local communities, and security forces promote lasting peace", from UN's official website: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/military>

10. Considers it necessary for the European Commission to use part of the remaining EU support package³¹ towards helping the population to establish legal business and source of revenue, thus changing the main source of Taliban's economic income from opium to legal productive cultivations;
11. Encourages the European Commission to establish human corridors, cooperating with universities and NGOs, following the example of La Sapienza University of Rome³², that allowed Afghan students to attend the Global Humanities faculty thanks to a fundraising³³;
12. Suggests the establishment of an EU scholarship program in the medical field destined to Afghan women, with the purpose of increasing the number of qualified female health workers in Afghanistan;
13. Considers it necessary for the European Commission to increase the number of European women aid workers who play an important role in ensuring humanitarian assistance to Afghan women³⁴;
14. Proposes that the USA and Europol further explore, as a consequence of the Agreement³⁵ made between them, with the purpose of "preventing, detecting, suppressing and investigating serious forms of international crime", Russia, Pakistan and Iran's financial relationship with the Taliban government.

³¹ According to the press release "Afghanistan: commission announces € 1 billion Afghan support package", from the European Commission's official website, 13th October 2021: https://cyprus.representation.ec.europa.eu/news/afghanistan-commission-announces-eu-1-billion-afghan-support-package-2021-10-13_en

³² According to the article "Studenti tra Roma e Kabul: un filo rosso per l'Afghanistan" of Arcs Culture Solidali's official website, 24th September 2021: <https://www.arcsculturesolidali.org/2021/09/24/student%20%b7-tra-roma-e-kabul-un-filo-rosso-per-lafghanistan/>

³³ According to the article "La Sapienza lancia una campagna di raccolta fondi in favore delle studentesse e degli studenti dell'Afghanistan" from La Sapienza University's official website, 14th September 2021: <https://www.uniroma1.it/it/per-afghanistan>

³⁴ "The Afghan delegation welcomed the presence of diplomatic missions in Afghanistan and stressed that they remain committed to respecting the rights and privileges granted to such missions and their staff under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, as well as the security of local staff, and that it would welcome a return of EU staff to Afghanistan", according to the article "Afghanistan: EU held talks in Doha with representatives of the Taliban declared Afghan interim government" of EEAS's official website, 28th November 2021: https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/108039/afghanistan-eu-held-talks-doha-representatives-taliban-declared-afghan-interim-government_en

³⁵ According to the "Agreement between the United States of America and the European police office", from EUROPOL's official website, 6th December 2001, updated on 15th October 2020: https://www.europol.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/agreement_between_the_united_states_of_america_and_the_european_police_office.pdf