

PRESS RELEASE

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Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
on the situation in Afghanistan

The European Union is deeply concerned at the intensification of armed hostilities in Afghanistan. The European Union calls for the immediate cessation of these hostilities to prevent further destruction and loss of life, and strongly urges all parties to seek a peaceful settlement through negotiation that will ultimately result in a political solution that would bring peace and stability to Afghanistan.

The EU fully supports the efforts of the UN Special Mission to Afghanistan and calls upon all Afghan parties to cooperate closely with the UN Special Mission which is uniquely placed to act as an impartial mediator in the search for peace. In this context, the EU welcomes the continuation of consultations by the UN Mission with neighbouring and other countries and regional institutions.

The EU reaffirms its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan, and urges all States to refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. In particular the flow of arms and ammunition into Afghanistan from outside its borders must end without delay. It also appeals to the Afghan parties to stop the use of landmines in view of the high number of innocent civilians falling victim to these weapons.

Of particular concern to the EU is the widespread violation of human rights in Afghanistan, especially discrimination against women and girls. The EU recalls, in this context, the Resolution 1076/1996 of the Security Council which denounced such discrimination as well as other violations of human rights in Afghanistan. The EU strongly urges the leaders of the various factions in Afghanistan to respect and act in accordance with the principles laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Charter, as well as all the other conventions on human rights to which Afghanistan is a signatory.

As one of the leading contributors of humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, the EU is concerned about the possible repercussions of human rights violations on the beneficiaries of EU relief programmes in Afghanistan. The EU looks forward to a dialogue with all the parties concerned on cooperation modalities that aim to ensure the delivery of aid whilst maintaining the quality of support already provided to the people of Afghanistan, irrespective of their gender and ethnic background.

The EU notes with concern that the continuation of the conflict in Afghanistan increases the potential for international terrorism and drug trafficking with destabilizing effects for the region and beyond. The EU therefore calls upon all parties in Afghanistan to halt such activities on Afghan soil.
