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'I/A' ITEM NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 2)/Council
Subject: EU-Pakistan Strategic Engagement Plan
- Signature authorisation

1. Since its adoption in 2012, the EU-Pakistan 5-year Engagement Plan has provided the overall political framework for the EU's engagement with Pakistan, building on the EU-Pakistan Cooperation Agreement¹, which has been defining the legal framework of the EU-Pakistani relations, since 2004. The EU-Pakistan 5-year Engagement Plan expired at the end of 2017.

¹ OJ L 378, 23.12.2004, p. 23.

2. In the Council conclusions on Pakistan of 18 July 2016², the Council invited the High Representative and the European Commission to initiate consultations with Pakistan on a framework for engagement beyond the current 5-year Engagement Plan, with particular priority given to human rights, the strengthening of democracy, rule of law and governance, as well as migration.
3. In the Council conclusions of 17 July 2017³, it is stipulated that in line with the Council conclusions of 18 July 2016, the EEAS and the Commission had initiated consultations with Pakistan on a political framework to replace the 5-year Engagement Plan through a new EU-Pakistan Strategic Engagement Plan.
4. On 14 September 2018, the EEAS transmitted to the Council a proposal for a EU- Pakistan Strategic Engagement Plan (WK 10651/2018) to be signed by the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on behalf of the EU with the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

In the new Strategic Engagement Plan, several sectors of thematic cooperation have been reinforced or introduced, with special attention to peace and security, democracy, rule of law, good governance, and human rights, migration, as well as energy and climate change, education, culture, science and technology.

5. In the Council conclusions of 19 November 2018⁴, the EU looked forward to strengthening its framework for engagement with Pakistan, through the signature of the new EU-Pakistan Strategic Engagement Plan (SEP) at the earliest possible occasion. The Council requested the High Representative and the European Commission to regularly report on the implementation of the SEP.
6. Having examined the text of the EU-Pakistan Strategic Engagement Plan, the Asia-Oceania Working Party agreed on the text annexed to this note on 22 February 2019. Pakistan communicated its agreement to the text of the EU-Pakistan Strategic Engagement Plan on 20 March 2019.

² 11246/16, para 13.

³ 11160/17, para 15.

⁴ 13824/18, para 11.

7. The Strategic Engagement Plan does not, nor is it intended to, create any legal obligations on either side under domestic or international law.
8. On 25 March 2019, on the occasion of the 4th Pakistan-EU Strategic Dialogue in Islamabad, the High Representative and the Pakistani Minister of Foreign Affairs announced that agreement was reached on the text of the Strategic Engagement Plan and that its signature would take place upon the completion of the authorisation process on the EU's side.
9. It is necessary that the Council authorises the signing of the EU-Pakistan Strategic Engagement Plan on behalf of the EU. The envisaged date for signature has not been agreed yet.
10. The Permanent Representatives Committee is invited to recommend that the Council authorises the signing of the EU-Pakistan Strategic Engagement Plan on behalf of the EU.

EU – Pakistan Strategic Engagement Plan (SEP)

Both sides reaffirm their determination to further strengthen the long term, forward-looking and broad based partnership for peace, development and prosperity. This partnership is rooted in shared values, principles, and commitments. The SEP would be based on the principles of the UN Charter, international norms and law, principles of mutual respect and trust, as well as common interests. It is also building upon the progress achieved so far under the Cooperation Agreement between the European Community and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on partnership and development of 2004, as well as the EU-Pakistan Summit Joint Statements of 2009 and 2010, and the 5-Year Engagement Plan (2012 - 2017).

Both sides aim at strengthening cooperation in the following areas on a mutually agreed basis, by:

I. Peace and Security

- i. Exchanging views and perspectives on regional stability and fostering inclusive cooperation towards regional peace, security, and prosperity;
- ii. Reinforcing the cooperation in disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as in the fields of counter-terrorism, preventing and countering violent extremism and tackling their root causes, as well as in the field of transnational organized crime; money laundering; anti-piracy; and cyber security;
- iii. Establishing a Security Dialogue, replacing the ones on counter-terrorism, and non-proliferation and disarmament, while, at the same time, building upon their work and results so far. This will further enhance consultations on the development of a comprehensive approach in all these areas;

- iv. Holding regular security and defense staff talks with special focus on regional security and in the field of crisis management;
- v. Exchanging information, best practices, and lessons learnt in various areas notably with respect to regional peace and security, in particular conflict prevention and resolution, reconciliation, and border management as well as providing support to Pakistan's efforts, as appropriate and mutually agreed;
- vi. Developing mutually agreed cooperation on the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution on Women, Peace and Security;
- vii. Exploring avenues of mutual cooperation in the field of counter-terrorism and violent extremism, including within the framework of the UN, in the context of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy (GCTS).

II. Democracy, Rule of Law, Good Governance, and Human Rights

- i. Working together to ensure good governance and promotion and protection of human rights at national and international levels, in accordance with each side's commitments and obligations to the universal protection of fundamental human rights;
- ii. Enhancing intercultural and inter-faith dialogue and understanding to promote tolerance and harmony, in particular through a mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge, people-to-people contacts and education;
- iii. Supporting Pakistan's efforts in the implementation of international treaties, conventions, and agreements in the areas of human rights, labour rights, environmental protection and good governance, as stipulated in the GSP Regulation;
- iv. Promoting parliamentary dialogue and exchanges, including through dedicated bilateral bodies, in order to address issues of common interest falling under the remit of this Plan;

- v. Supporting the implementation of electoral reforms and taking into consideration the EU Election Observation Mission Recommendations, while considering the possibility of deploying EU EOMs for future elections;
- vi. Developing areas of cooperation and exchanging best practices on gender mainstreaming, women empowerment and elimination of all forms of violence against women;
- vii. Exchanging best practices and fostering cooperation between relevant think tanks and institutions to strengthen democracy; human rights; rule of law; and good governance;
- viii. Acknowledging and promoting the role of civil society and academia notably in support of national priorities;
- ix. Sharing of best practices in support for national plans and policies in the areas of good governance, human rights and rule of law;
- x. Enhancing dialogue and cooperation in the multilateral framework, including on protection and promotion of human rights in the UN system;
- xi. Pursuing development cooperation under the financial instruments for external action in the area of human rights, rule of law, and good governance.

III. Migration and Mobility

- i. Ensuring the full and effective implementation of the EU-Pakistan Readmission Agreement;
- ii. Stemming irregular migration and tackling its challenges in full respect of human rights, including through strengthened cooperation on migrant smuggling and human trafficking, supporting all efforts for the reintegration of returnees, and addressing the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement;
- iii. Working towards a broader, mutually beneficial and comprehensive dialogue on migration and mobility with clear targets and joint commitments;

- iv. Recognizing the potential development benefits of regular migration through agreed regular pathways while respecting national competences;
- v. Strengthening international and regional cooperation and dialogue, within the framework of the United Nations, the Budapest Process and its Silk Routes Partnership for Migration, and other relevant regional fora;
- vi. Addressing ways to protect and support refugees, including the large protracted refugee population, as well as host communities in Pakistan, and cooperating for the voluntary and sustainable return of refugees to their homeland.

IV. Trade and Investment

- i. Cooperating in order to further develop and strengthen the rules-based multilateral trading system under WTO, notably through the implementation of WTO rules and agreements, including the Trade Facilitation Agreement;
- ii. Cooperating towards successful conclusion and implementation of multilateral and plurilateral agreements, such as the Environmental Goods Agreement (EGA) or the Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA);
- iii. Supporting regional economic integration and connectivity amongst regional partners;
- iv. Improving trade and investment opportunities by ensuring an open and non-discriminatory business and investment environment, including in areas such as customs clearance, enforcement of intellectual property rights, including geographical indications, technical barriers to trade, sanitary and phytosanitary rules, etc.;
- v. Strengthening the EU-Pakistan trade and investment relations by making full use of existing mechanisms, and considering complementary ones as appropriate, including through working towards a dedicated trade and investment dialogue and a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement, when conditions are right;

- vi. Making full use of the institutional mechanisms to address trade issues and contribute to a more favourable business and investment environment;
- vii. Encouraging public-private partnerships, business-to-business dialogue and corporate sector joint ventures;
- viii. Reviewing on a regular basis the progress in the effective implementation of the international conventions related to labour and human rights, protection of the environment and good governance, in the context of GSP+;
- ix. Pursuing cooperation through financial instruments for external action to further promote trade and investment relations.

V. Sustainable Development

a) Economic, Social, and Environmental Sustainability

- i. Exploring the possibility of cooperation in promoting decent work for all, in particular for youth and women, productive employment, social protection, gender mainstreaming and women empowerment, poverty eradication, occupational health and safety, and the fostering of sustainable global supply and value chain;
- ii. Considering developing and enhancing cooperation in agriculture including modernization of agro-based industry, expansion of storage facilities and research and development;
- iii. Encouraging the development and growth of “green” business and “the circular economy”;
- iv. Developing cooperation in areas such as clean air, waste management, chemicals, water management, biodiversity, soil and land, food security and flood protection, as well as sustainable urban development;
- v. Facilitating the exchange of knowledge, expertise and technology to respond to natural and manmade disasters and training and capacity-building in these areas;

- vi. Pursuing development cooperation in rural development and poverty alleviation under the financial instruments for external action.

b) Climate Change

- i. Developing cooperation on the implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement, including through climate finance, and technology transfer with a view to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and to encourage climate-resilient development;
- ii. Exploring possibilities for cooperation under the Montreal Protocol;
- iii. Identifying opportunities for strengthened cooperation, including coordination at international fora.

c) Energy

- i. Expanding energy cooperation, including on renewable energy generation and consumption, green technologies, energy efficiency, smart grids, clean coal technology, energy security, and energy research and innovation;
- ii. Exchanging views on possibilities for joint initiatives, including the “*Sustainable Energy for All*” objectives, launched by the UN Secretary General;
- iii. Promotion of cooperation especially in corporate sector, joint ventures in the energy sector, including hydroelectric and thermal power;
- iv. Exchanging views on regional and global energy security development, as well as on developments on energy in international organizations and multilateral energy initiatives.

VI. Education and Culture

a) Education

- i. Continuing development cooperation under the financial instruments for external action in the area of primary and secondary education;
- ii. Assisting reforms at federal and provincial level to improve both basic education and technical and vocational training;
- iii. Strengthening cooperation in skills development with the involvement of EU Member States, businesses, universities and other relevant stakeholders.

b) Higher Education

- i. Encouraging the development of educational contacts and opportunities, as well as facilitating links between academia and industries, and promoting mobility of students, researchers, and higher education staff, with special attention to women's full access to higher education, including through initiatives for their increased admittance in universities;
- ii. Strengthening the dialogue and cooperation on education, inter alia, through Erasmus+, the *Marie Skłodowska-Curie* action, academic exchange and fellowship programs of EU Member States, and higher education fairs;
- iii. Supporting the modernization, innovation and internationalization of higher education as well as enhancing quality education;
- iv. Sharing knowledge and expertise in relation to improving access to inclusive and equitable quality education and employability.

c) Culture

- i. Creating opportunities for greater engagement of youth and understanding of each other's culture and heritage, through enhanced people-to-people contacts and mobility;
- ii. Promoting culture as a development enabler facilitating social inclusion;
- iii. Enhancing policy dialogue and cooperation on culture, including through the promotion of networking among EU Members States' cultural institutes, and encouraging joint projects between EU and Pakistan artists/creative professionals in various fields (cultural heritage, cultural and creative sectors);
- iv. Promoting cooperation in archaeological research, restoration, and conservation of historical sites, as well as in the fight against trafficking in cultural property;
- v. Considering opportunities for cultural cooperation under the EU Strategy on International Cultural Relations including through financial instruments for external action;
- vi. Fostering intercultural understanding, interfaith dialogue, tolerance and mutual respect, as essential enablers of a responsible global citizenship.

VII. Science and Technology

- i. Promoting EU-Pakistan cooperation in science, technology and innovation; including through knowledge sharing, improved coordination through participation by Pakistani researchers in EU collaborative research projects and individual fellowships under EU Framework program, and strengthen the sources of local information and advice for interested Pakistani researchers;
- ii. Encouraging the development of links between research institutions, the exchange of information on opportunities for research cooperation, joint events, and other relevant activities;
- iii. Exploring avenues of cooperation in the areas of mutual interest.

VIII. Dialogue Framework

Further intensifying the partnership by strengthening existing mechanisms, to make them more efficient, and to set up dialogues in new areas, in particular by aiming at:

- i. Monitoring the overall progress on the implementation of SEP under the present dialogue framework; both sides will strive to hold Summit-level meetings subject to mutual agreement;
- ii. Continuing the Strategic Dialogue between the Foreign Minister of Pakistan and the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to review the implementation of the current SEP, covering all strategic aspect of the relationship;
- iii. Continuing the Political Dialogue to complement the Strategic Dialogue, focusing on political and security matters;
- iv. Strengthening sectoral dialogues, notably on migration, human rights, security, and energy, as well as encouraging discussions in emerging areas of cooperation, such as, environment, climate change, and sustainable development, aiming inter alia at the effective implementation of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and more specifically, at the focal sectors of EU development co-operation, in line with *Agenda 2030*, as well as the *European Consensus* and Pakistan's *Vision 2025*.
