



Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 8 April 2019
(OR. en)

7978/19

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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
On:	8 April 2019
To:	Delegations
No. prev. doc.:	8170/19
Subject:	Afghanistan's Peace Process - Council conclusions (8 April 2019)

Delegations will find in the annex the Council conclusions on Afghanistan's Peace Process, as adopted by the Council at its 3684th meeting held on 8 April 2019.

Council conclusions on Afghanistan's Peace Process

Foreign Affairs Council, 8 April 2019

1. Recalling previous Council Conclusions on Afghanistan, notably those of 19 November 2018, the EU hereby reaffirms its political commitment and long-term support to the people of Afghanistan on their path towards peace, security and prosperity.
2. The EU encourages the Government of Afghanistan and the Taliban to intensify their efforts towards a peaceful and negotiated settlement of the conflict. The EU supports all efforts to catalyse such a process, which has created a political opportunity that should be seized.
3. Direct negotiations between Afghans, with the Government of Afghanistan and the Taliban at their core, should begin as soon as possible, ensuring an inclusive Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation process. The EU strongly supports a process that respects the sovereignty and independence of Afghanistan and the dignity of its people. The EU stands ready to support the peace process, including its implementation, with the aim of preserving and building upon the political, economic and social achievements of the people of Afghanistan since 2001, which should be irreversible. Any future peace agreement must be to the benefit of all parties. The EU commends the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan on its commitment to achieving peace and stability in Afghanistan.

4. The Afghan peace process requires the full support and constructive involvement of the entire international community, in particular key regional and international stakeholders. The EU must be associated from the outset to all stages of the peace process. The EU confirms that it stands ready to support the following aspects of the process: to help make the peace process inclusive; to assist with reforms, including security sector reform; to act as a guarantor of a peace process, if requested by the parties; to assist with reintegration of fighters and their families; and to promote regional trade and connectivity. The Council invites the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the Commission to implement these actions as the peace process progresses. In this respect, the Council welcomes the role of the Special Envoy of the EU for Afghanistan.
5. In order to provide substantial support for the implementation of a peace agreement and to contribute effectively to the reconstruction needs of the country, the Council considers it important that a peace agreement be negotiated in an inclusive way, is approved by the Government of Afghanistan and that it (i) entails the renunciation of violence; (ii) counters any threat of transnational terrorist organizations acting from Afghan territory; (iii) adheres to the rule of law and respect for the universal human rights of all Afghans, in particular as regards women, children, and persons belonging to minorities, consistent with the UN Charter, international law and as enshrined in the Afghan Constitution; and (iv) ensures the continuity of the Afghan State, its institutions, the constitutional order and Afghanistan's international obligations, and implements any changes to these through a legitimate and inclusive process; and (v) allows for possibilities to ensure accountability, including through transitional justice, and to address the grievances of the victims of the conflict in Afghanistan. The EU stands ready to contribute, both politically and financially, to the implementation of a peace settlement that embodies these values and principles.

6. In line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, the EU reiterates the importance of a meaningful participation of women in all peace initiatives, including formal and informal peace negotiations. Acknowledging the achievements of the last 18 years and in order to strengthen the sustainability of any peace settlement, the EU is committed to support increased women's participation at all levels of Afghan society.
 7. The EU reiterates the importance of the Government of Afghanistan and all relevant stakeholders working towards improved, inclusive, credible and transparent presidential, provincial council and district council elections in 2019, which are an essential element for a strengthened democracy and stability in Afghanistan, by effectively implementing lessons learned of the 2018 parliamentary elections.
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