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## FACT SHEET

# Strengthening EU action in Afghanistan and Pakistan

27 October 2009



The European Union on 27 October announced a plan for strengthening EU action in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The plan marks a step change in the EU's engagement in the region.

### What has the EU set out to do?

The plan comes at a crucial time for the region. It reflects the strategic importance that the EU attaches to Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as the EU's readiness to be an active player in the region together with partners in the international community.

The EU has agreed to focus on areas where additional efforts are necessary, and where the EU could offer added value. This has resulted in a package of measures to support Afghan and Pakistani civilian capacity, increased political and democratic reform and good governance, improved security and socioeconomic development.

### How will it be done?

The plan builds on what the EU is already doing in Afghanistan, where present EU support amounts to close to EUR 1 billion per year. For Pakistan the plan builds on commitments from the first EU-Pakistan Summit, held in June 2009. International coordination must improve. Civilian and political efforts must be strengthened. The conflict in Afghanistan cannot be solved through military force alone. The countries themselves must take on a leadership role in shaping a prosperous and sustainable future.

For Afghanistan, the plan identifies a few crucial areas in which where to concentrate new efforts, key among them being, how to improve local governance. But the EU will also continue the efforts it is already making to strengthen the rule of law, build a civilian police force, protect human rights and promote economic growth through rural development.

For Pakistan, the EU is ready to assist in strengthening state capacity to address to complex challenges in the country. The plan emphasises to the long-term nature of the EU's commitment to Afghanistan, Pakistan and the region.

Implementation is key. Priorities and activities of the plan will be developed into a realistic, achievable and costed scheme of implementation, the progress of which will be regularly reviewed by the Council.

The plan reflects the EU's core values. Promotion of democracy, human rights and gender equality are themes running through the plan, together with stability and socio-economic development.

### Supporting regional cooperation

What does the EU plan contain? The plan is divided into three major parts: one for each country and one for regional matters. In this part the EU undertakes to enhance regional integration and regional cooperation. The EU intends, for example, to:

- Help build institutional capacity to engage in regional cooperation.
- Engage in enhancing counter-terrorism cooperation.
- Work to improve integrated border management and cooperation.
- Support efforts in disaster risk reduction in both countries and at the regional level.
- Support strategic educational cooperation initiatives.

### Supporting Afghanistan

The EU and its Member States are already extensively involved in supporting the people of Afghanistan. The EU will improve its effectiveness by bringing Community and Member States' efforts together and improving co-ordination under the leadership of the United Nations. Under the new plan the EU will direct its activities towards the following areas among others:

- *Political dialogue:* In relation with the people, the new government of Afghanistan will have to commit itself to a political agenda. A renewed compact could underline the long-term commitment of the international community.

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- *Civilian capacity building:* Together with the UN, the EU will assist Afghanistan in training its current and future government officials and other experts. Increasing the channelling of assistance through Afghan institutions is also key.
- *Sub-national governance:* Local governance is a key feature of every functioning society. The EU will look at new ways of supporting governance at the sub-national level, in close cooperation with the relevant Afghan authorities.
- *Democratic institutions:* The EU will assist in reviewing the electoral system and improve its implementation ahead of the 2010 elections. The EU will continue to support human rights in Afghanistan.
- *Reintegration:* The EU will support Afghan-led measures to disarm, demobilise and reintegrate former anti-government fighters.
- *Rule of law:* The EU will push for clear, targeted and tangible action in fighting corruption. The EU will continue to support institutions of justice and accountability, and to reduce the illegal production of drugs.
- *Policing:* The EU reinforces EUPOL and continue to support the building up of the Afghan National Police, in close coordination with other similar programmes.
- *Agriculture:* The EU will provide technical assistance to help further improve the standards of Afghan produce for export.
- *Non-proliferation:* The EU will engage in an enhanced expert dialogue in the existing frameworks on non-proliferation, to identify opportunities for future cooperation.
- *Increasing trade:* The EU and Pakistan will work towards further liberalisation of trade in goods and services with the aim of mutually enhancing market access and converging on regulatory matters.
- *Development:* The EU will continue to support socio-economic development in Pakistan, including in the education sector and through the promotion of safe, affordable and sustainable energy supplies.

The EU will promote international coordination in support of Pakistan, including through the Friends of Democratic Pakistan (FoDP) and the Pakistan Development Forum (PDF).

## Cooperating more closely with Pakistan

The EU aims to deepen its relations with Pakistan. The political dialogue will include regular formalised meetings for policy exchanges in support of our common agenda. The EU will focus on the following areas among others:

- *Malakand Strategy:* The EU will assist in the implementation of the Malakand Strategy by support to security sector reform and the rule of law. Additional longer term support will be identified.
- *Institutions:* The EU and Member States will assist in cooperation aimed at strengthening democracy, rule of law and human rights. The EU will offer to assist with implementing the recommendations of the Electoral Observation Mission following the 2008 elections. The EU will support Pakistani human rights institutions and civil society in line with internationally recognized norms and practices.
- *Counter-terrorism:* The EU and Pakistan will establish a regular counter-terrorism dialogue supported by assistance and cooperation in the security sector, e.g. with the police and judiciary.

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### For more information:

The website for the Swedish Presidency of the EU: [www.se2009.eu](http://www.se2009.eu)

The website for the Council of the European Union: [www.consilium.europa.eu](http://www.consilium.europa.eu)

The website for the European Commission: [www.ec.europa.eu](http://www.ec.europa.eu)

