

## Afghanistan Shall Not Be Forgotten

The Congress of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) Party convening in Dublin, Ireland, on 2-4 June 2022:

### Notes that:

- the Taliban take-over of Afghanistan by military force and their rejection of democracy, raises serious concerns about their legitimacy;
- the Taliban went back on their word on 23 March by keeping the ban on schooling for girls above 6th grade - and have since then further tightened restrictions on women's rights - despite access to education being a fundamental Islamic and civic right;
- the United Nations and NGOs should be thanked for lessening terrible deprivation in Afghanistan, distributing USD 1.67 billion of humanitarian assistance by the end of 2021;
- the UN sanctions monitoring team report that "there are no recent signs that the Taliban has taken steps to limit the activities of foreign terrorist fighters in the country";
- the appointment, by the UN Human Rights Council, on April 1, 2022, of Richard Bennett as United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Afghanistan;
- Extrajudicial killings and disappearances are still prevalent;
- there is a clamp down on free media, with a severe shrinkage of civil space and foreign broadcasters having been taken off local channels;
- the Biden Administration has appropriated half of the USD 7 billion in frozen Afghan Central Bank assets to pay compensation to the families of victims of the 9/11 attack pending a court ruling;
- China and Russia's engagement with the Taliban has the potential to undermine efforts to improve human rights;
- because of the war in Ukraine, interest by governments in assisting Afghanistan and Afghans seeking refuge is waning.
- the Taliban's recent order barring the cultivation of opium poppies is welcomed if it is effectively applied;
- many Afghans who worked for western military forces on site in the last 20 years are now in high danger of being persecuted by the Taliban;
- the EU has, between 2002 and 2021, provided Afghanistan with over four billion Euros in development aid, making Afghanistan the largest beneficiary of EU development assistance of any country in the world.

### Believes that:

- the Taliban has so far failed to form an inclusive government; to govern in tolerance; to recognise and protect in particular the universal rights

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of women and minorities, including LGBTI persons, and their full participation in Afghan life;

- dialogue should nevertheless continue with Taliban leaders and factions to seek improvements in governance, human rights and in countering Al Qaeda and ISIS-K;
- the strengthening and recent extension of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Afghanistan's mandate signifies critical continued international engagement and support for the people of Afghanistan.

#### **Calls for:**

- the continued withholding of international recognition of the Taliban regime, keeping sanctions in place and blocking the regime's access to the international financial system, until Afghanistan has a more inclusive government with rights for all respected;
- the immediate opening of all schools to girls and restoring the right of women to gainful employment, targeting donor development funding in Afghanistan at those provinces which allow equal access to education and have greater respect for human rights;
- the funding of the already established Afghan Exile Online University with financial support from the EU;
- the full USD 7 billion in Afghan government frozen assets to be transferred in their entirety to a trust fund exclusively for the provision of humanitarian aid to the Afghan people and in support of job creation based on equal opportunity for both Afghan women and men in the private sector;
- countries with land borders to continue facilitating the movement of refugees to their final destinations; that all countries should open their doors generously to Afghan refugees and asylum seekers who should be allowed to seek gainful employment to live in dignity in their host countries until it might be safe to return to Afghanistan;
- the EEAS and EU Member States to strengthen their dialogues with the neighbouring countries of Afghanistan in an effort to accelerate and maintain their engagement in seeking political solutions within Afghanistan, without where possible compromising the fundamental values of the EU;
- the EU Member States to develop a united response to asylum seekers and refugees from Afghanistan wishing to enter the EU, preferably via a swift implementation of the "New Pact on Asylum and Migration" to make sure all countries take equal responsibility regarding the flow of refugees, with all EU+ countries accepting refugees from Afghanistan as a part of that responsibility;

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- humanitarian aid to continue to be provided by the United Nations and NGOs directly to the Afghan people, financed by European countries and other development partners;
- all EU countries to ensure any form of financial development aid does not go to any source directly connected to the Taliban, and to keep watch that any other developmental aid does not turn into *de facto* aid to the Taliban, while ensuring the humanitarian aid needed in the region can continue;
- EU Member States should create and implement without delay special visa programmes to welcome for those and their families not yet evacuated especially at risk from the Taliban regime such as former embassy and other staff, female judges, military interpreters, civil society activists and journalists;
- the EU to continue to put pressure on the Taliban within the international framework-against Taliban persecution of women as well as ethnic, LGBTI and religious minorities;
- maximum political and financial support to the activity of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights in Afghanistan.

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