



# Brussels Conference on AFGHANISTAN

4-5 October 2016

PARTNERSHIP FOR PROSPERITY AND PEACE

**PRESS**  
**EN**

**BACKGROUND<sup>1</sup>**  
Brussels, 29 September 2016

## **Brussels Conference on Afghanistan** **4-5 October 2016 in Brussels** **#AfghanConf**

The European Union and the Government of Afghanistan will co-host the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan on 4-5 October 2016. The main conference on 5 October, to be held in the Justus Lipsius building, will bring together more than **70 countries** and **20 international organisations** and agencies.

The aim of the conference is to endorse a **reform programme** to support the Afghan government and **to ensure continued international political and financial support** over the next four years to bolster political and economic stability, state-building and development.

The conference is taking place under the patronage of President of the European Council **Donald Tusk** and President of Afghanistan **Ashraf Ghani** who will open the Conference.

The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy **Federica Mogherini** and **Neven Mimica**, European Commissioner for Development Cooperation will co-chair the conference on behalf of the European Union.

Minister of Foreign Affairs **Salahuddin Rabbani** and Minister of Finance **Eklil Hakimi** will co-chair on behalf of Afghanistan. Chief Executive **Dr. Abdullah Abdullah** will also participate.

On 4 October, two side events will take place in the Charlemagne building. The first high level event is entitled '**Empowered women, prosperous Afghanistan**'. The second high level event will focus on **regional integration and prosperity**.

### Press opportunities:

[See indicative programme](#)

[Media advisory 4-5 October](#)

[Media advisory, side events of 4 October 2016](#)

\* \* \*

*Press conferences and public events by video streaming:*

<http://video.consilium.europa.eu/en/webcasts>

*Video coverage in broadcast quality (MPEG4) and photo gallery*

<http://tvnewsroom.consilium.europa.eu/event/brussels-afghanistan-conference>

---

<sup>1</sup> This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the press office.

## A partnership for prosperity and peace

The Brussels Conference on Afghanistan (BCA) will provide a platform for **comprehensive political and development discussions** between the international community and the Afghan government. It is expected to convey a message of **strong support for Afghanistan's reform agenda**, state-building process and inclusive economic and social development efforts.

Against a backdrop of the political, security and socio-economic challenges, the Afghan leadership will need continued international solidarity to ensure economic development and political reform, moving the country **towards self-reliance, prosperity and peace**. To that effect, the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan is expected to deliver on three main aspects:

- Renewed partnership towards **state- and institution building** through the implementation of the reform package as set out by the National Unity Government;
- Continued **international funding at or near current levels until 2020**, and increased aid effectiveness in support of the new Afghan development framework;
- **Regional support for a political process** oriented towards peace and cross-border economic cooperation.

The Afghan Government has made **good progress** in putting forward key deliverables for the BCA: the Afghan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF); a number of sectoral reforms spelled out in renewed and updated National Priority Programmes (NPPs); and the Self-Reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework (SMAF) document, which sets out specific progress indicators for the next two years.

The BCA is expected to send a **strong political signal**, highlighting the need for a political process towards peace and regional cooperation. Securing financial support over the course of the next four years is crucial for the Afghan government to bring about a strategic shift towards stabilisation and possibly peace. This will involve Afghanistan's neighbours, building on an emerging regional consensus.

- [Afghan national peace and development framework](#)
- [Self-reliance through mutual accountability framework, 5 September 2015](#)

### Programme of the meeting

On 5 October at 9.00, the High Representative of the EU **Federica Mogherini** and Minister of Foreign Affairs **Salahuddin Rabbani** will introduce the event. The opening session will then follow with statements by the President of the European Council **Donald Tusk**, the President of Afghanistan **Ashraf Ghani** and the United Nations Secretary General **Ban Ki-moon**. There will be a family photo.

At 11.00, the government of Afghanistan will present its **Afghan National Peace and Development Framework** and the revised **Self-Reliance Mutual Accountability Framework**. The **World Bank** will then present its economic outlook for the country.

Representatives of partner governments and organisations will deliver their statements throughout the day, either on the morning from 11.30 or in the afternoon from 14.15.

**Partner countries** expected to be represented include: all EU member states and Albania, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei, Canada, Chile, China, Egypt, Georgia, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Jordan,

Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Singapore, South Africa, Switzerland, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, USA, Uzbekistan.

**Invited organisations** include: Asian Development Bank, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, Aga Khan Foundation / Development Network, European Investment Bank, Food and Agriculture Organisation, Islamic Development Bank, International Monetary Fund, International Organization for Migration, NATO, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, International Committee of the Red Cross, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, United Nations, UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, United Nations Development Programme, UNESCO, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNICEF, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UN Women, World Food Programme.

At 14.00, representatives from **Afghan civil society** will give a statement.

The closing session will take place at 17.30 with statements by Chief Executive **Abdullah Abdullah**, High Representative **Federica Mogherini** and European Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development **Neven Mimica**.

A press conference will close the event at +/-18.00.

The entire event will be livestreamed on: <http://video.consilium.europa.eu/en/webcasts>

## **Background**

In July 2012, at the **Tokyo Conference**, the international community agreed on the Tokyo mutual accountability framework, to provide ongoing support for the development of Afghanistan against concrete progress in implementing Afghan reforms.

It was also agreed that a series of ministerial-level meetings on Afghanistan would take place to support progress in the country. The Brussels Conference will be the second of these meetings, following the **London Conference on Afghanistan** which took place on 4 December 2014

- [Communique from the London Conference on Afghanistan, 4 December 2014](#)

The accountability framework was updated in 2015 at a senior officials meeting, as the **self-reliance through mutual accountability framework**. The Brussels Conference is expected to reconfirm the support of the international community for this framework in the coming years and assess progress delivered on mutual commitments.

## The EU and Afghanistan

In July 2016, the Council of the EU adopted conclusions on Afghanistan, endorsing the second annual implementation report of the "European Union Afghanistan Strategy: 2014-16".

The Council affirmed in particular that the EU and member states overarching strategic goal should remain the **development of Afghan institutions** to safeguard progress to date and to make further progress in the development of a more effective and ultimately sustainable Afghan state. Key objectives are to promote security; reinforce democracy; encourage economic and human development ; strengthen the rule of law, including the fight against corruption, and the protection and promotion of human rights in particular the rights of women, including in the context of the peace process and continue the fight against the narcotic and drug industry.

The EU is expected to renew its commitment as a reliable partner for Afghanistan, maintaining its financial commitments until 2020 at **more than €200 million per year**. Member states are also expected to follow the same direction. In recent years, **the EU and its Member States have provided about €1 billion per year**.

[EU-Afghanistan relations factsheet](#)

### ***Peace and reconciliation***

The EU has supported the important efforts of the Afghan government towards peace and reconciliation. It has welcomed and encouraged coordinated efforts to support the Afghan government in promoting a meaningful, Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process, as the only viable path towards a sustainable resolution of the conflict. The EU welcomed the initiatives to create a conducive environment for such a process.

The EU welcomed the signing of a peace agreement by the government of Afghanistan and Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin on 29 September 2016.

[Statement by the spokesperson on the initialling of a peace agreement by the government of Afghanistan and Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin](#)

### ***State Building Contract***

EU development assistance under the current multi-annual programme has four focal areas: agriculture and rural development, health, rule of law and policing, as well as governance and democratisation. The EU will start providing budget support through a **state-building contract** of €200 million over 2 years from 2017 onwards. The state building contract will be signed in the margins of the conference on 4 October in the Charlemagne building at 13.30 by the European Commissioner for Development Cooperation **Neven Mimica** and the Afghan Minister of Finance **Eklil Ahmad Hakimi**.

The EU's state building contracts have been designed to provide budget support in fragile and transition situations. The €200 million for Afghanistan will provide the government of Afghanistan with fiscal space to finance its own strategic development priorities and policies as outlined in the new Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework. A robust policy dialogue on reform progress in public policies, the macro-economic framework, public financial management, as well as on transparency and oversight will determine the disbursements under this contract.

More information on [EU-Afghanistan relations](#)

[Council conclusions on Afghanistan of 18 July 2017](#)

## In the margins of the conference

### Empowered women, prosperous Afghanistan

On 4 October, a high level event, entitled 'Empowered women, prosperous Afghanistan' will take place from 14.00 to 18.00 in the Charlemagne building. This event will provide a platform for the Afghan government to outline policy progress and plans on the protection and empowerment of women. It will include two panels, one focusing on the political and human rights of Afghan women and the other on their socio-economic situation. This event is open to accredited media and will be livestreamed.

- [Agenda - Empowered Women, Prosperous Afghanistan](#)
- [More information about the event 'Empowered Women, Prosperous Afghanistan'](#)
- Livestreaming: [Webcast - Empowered Women, Prosperous Afghanistan \(live on 4 October\)](#)

### Regional integration and prosperity

A second high level event on regional integration and prosperity will take place on 4 October from 16.00 to 18.30 in the Charlemagne building. This event is expected to set the next steps for regional economic cooperation projects that can attract the resources of Afghanistan, regional partners and the wider international community. It will gather representatives from regional and international partner countries, as well as from international organisations.

The event will be opened by European Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development **Neven Mimica**, Vice-President of the Asian Development Bank **Wencai Zhang** and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan **Salahuddin Rabbani**. Senior regional representatives and President Ghani will deliver key-note addresses, followed by a panel discussion with development banks, private sector and participants. These introductory remarks will be recorded and transmitted via [EBS](#) at +/- 18:00.

### UNESCO Exhibition

Selected images from a UNESCO photo exhibition, entitled 'The Afghanistan we are proud of' will be on display in the Charlemagne building on Level 02 on 4 October. These photos were submitted as part of an Afghanistan-wide photo competition launched by UNESCO in 2015.

A selection of images will also be displayed in the Justus Lipsius. On 5 October at 10.45, the Director General of UNESCO **Irina Bokova** will present this selection of images (photo opportunity, Justus Lipsius building floor 50).

[More information on the UNESCO photo exhibition](#)

---