

R02 A common position on Afghanistan

During the Taliban's brutal forceful takeover of Kabul between 14 August and 1 September 2021, more than 123,000 Afghan civilians were evacuated by US forces and its coalition partners, along with diplomatic personnel and foreigner citizens living in the country. The crisis comes on top of the 2.2 million Afghan refugees already living in neighbouring countries and over 3.5 internally displaced Afghans forced to flee their homes inside Afghanistan's borders.

Since the announcement of the US military withdrawal from Afghanistan, the Taliban forcibly seized power, resulting in stricter controls, brutal rule and, in particular, a much worse situation for women and girls, civil society, journalists, LGBTQI+ people, activists, interpreters, researchers and many others in the country.

While Afghanistan's history of conflicts is extensive and complicated, it is clear that the 20-year war on terror, led by the US government but with the support of many states, has been a failure. The EU and their Western allies have yet to fully acknowledge their historical responsibility in the region and to the people of Afghanistan. Yet, since the end of the former Taliban rule in Afghanistan, a whole generation of young girls and women have had the possibility to study and to work.

This resolution wants to clearly acknowledge that the current situation, with thousands of people desperately trying to leave the country, and with women locked up again in their homes is unacceptable. There needs to be a full reappraisal of Western aid and military interventions in Afghanistan. The international community – especially the West – must critically review its involvement in Afghanistan, their foreign policy and colonial continuities in order to avoid repeating the same mistakes. However, first and foremost, this specific resolution aims to set a baseline for how the EU and its European allies need to act in the current situation in order to provide the best immediate support for the people of Afghanistan.

The European approach to the situation must be built on two pillars: 1) grant protection to those who seek it; and 2) increase and improve the support for and protection of the people who remain in the country. The first point includes maximum efforts to welcome Afghan refugees to Europe and give them full protection and security in the countries of destination. The second point includes a balanced and realistic approach to continued humanitarian and development support in Afghanistan and its neighbouring countries. While we should not give any state support to the Taliban government, we will need to support those organisations (e.g. humanitarian organisations working with access) which negotiate with the Taliban in order to facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance to the people who remain in the country. Continued and strengthened support and guarantees of their safety must be ensured for development actors working with the Afghan civil society as well

as support for women and girls both within Afghanistan and in its neighbouring countries while ensuring no funds go through Taliban government institutions.

While the EU's Member State leaders have already made, and are continuing to make efforts to meet the second pillar mentioned above, there is far too little effort by EU states to provide protection and refuge for vulnerable people from Afghanistan. As Greens, we will always protect human rights, including the right to asylum. We advocate for the immediate end of push backs, the protection of human rights in the European border policy and a generous and flexible reception policy which takes into account the will of individual migrations.

The European Greens are advocating for:

1. Official safe passage for people, and their families, who have worked for foreign governments, human rights defenders, journalists, civil society activists, women, police and law enforcement officials, judges and professionals of the justice system.
2. Safeguarding effective protection and the establishment of safe and legal routes to EU territory, particularly through resettlement, humanitarian visas and family reunification, for all Afghan asylum seekers and their families, especially those whose occupation result in greater threat.
3. Considering that resettlement procedures are often delayed, these continuous evacuation measures should be accompanied by rapid evacuation measures of the vulnerable people who highly risk persecution by the Taliban. This includes especially people who have worked for foreign governments.
4. These resettlement procedures for Afghans in danger in Afghanistan or neighbouring countries should not conceal the asylum status of the Afghans who are already in Europe. Their asylum application must be re-examined on the basis of the political and social changes in Afghanistan. Similarly, the EU should pay attention and support the resettlement process of Afghan refugees who are already in Turkey or on the Western Balkan route.
5. Increased and continuous support to humanitarian/development actors able to work with humanitarian access in Afghanistan.
6. Increased support for development actors who work with civil society in Afghanistan as well as women and girls in Afghanistan and in the neighbouring countries.
7. Continued support for the EU Afghanistan Peace Support Mechanism (APSM) II.
8. Not to recognise the Taliban as the legitimate government of Afghanistan, yet, to seek dialogue, when necessary, in order to secure support and humanitarian aid for the civil population and to enforce the five benchmarks as the basis for the European Union engagement in Afghanistan.