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**NOTE**

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from: General Secretariat of the Council  
to: Delegations

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Subject: Summary record of the meeting of the European Parliament **Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET)** held in Brussels on 3 December 2012  
In the chair: Ms Neyts (ALDE, BE), Mr Kovatchev (EPP, BG)

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**I. Exchange of views with Hina Rabbani Kher, Foreign Minister of Pakistan**

***In association with the Delegation for relations with the countries of South Asia***

Ms Hina Rabbani Kher began by outlining the main features of Pakistan's foreign policy. She said that Pakistan had understood that peace within the country was to be sought outside, therefore Pakistan was reaching out to its immediate neighbourhood. Concerning relations with India, she said that, after 60 years of territorial disputes, the time had come for a normalisation of relations. On Afghanistan, she noted that refugees crossing the border were a source of instability for Pakistan and her country was working as a peace facilitator - and nothing more than that - vis-à-vis Afghanistan, so as to solve the problem of refugees at the source.

The second part of Ms Hina Rabbani Kher's speech was devoted to internal issues, notably the fight against extremism (voluntarily pursued by Pakistan and not imposed from the outside), reform of the country's constitutional set-up so as to give greater powers and financial means to provinces, and legislation to protect the vulnerable.

In reply to questions put by Members, Ms Hina Rabbani Kher emphasised that Pakistan was a fully functioning democracy, with good interaction between the legislative and executive powers (Mr Salafranca (EPP, ES)). She dismissed as misconceptions allegations by Mr Tannock (ECR, UK) of discrimination against religious minorities. She also dismissed calls for reform of the law on blasphemy (Mr Atkins (ECR, UK)), arguing that Pakistan had a vibrant press and civil society. On the case of Malala Yousafzai (Mr Salafranca (EPP, ES), Mr Karim (ECR, UK)), she acknowledged that education was a responsibility of the State and reassured MEPs that Pakistan had offered Malala a protection programme (that she had refused). On the upcoming parliamentary elections, she welcomed a possible election observation mission from the EU (Mr Karim (ECR, UK)). On foreign policy issues, she said that the period from now until 2014, when the international forces were due to leave Afghanistan, was crucial to ensure that the situation became irreversible. She added that she was reassured by the NATO Secretary-General's statement that ISAF would leave no security vacuum in the country (Mr Salafranca (EPP, ES), Mr Tannock (ECR, UK)). On the Middle East, the Minister said that Pakistan had strong strategic relations, especially with the GCC. Concerning the Palestinian UN bid (Mr Scholz (GUE/NGL, DE)), she expressed Pakistan's support but noted that Pakistan was not particularly involved in the MEPP, and dismissed the idea of a nuclear-free Middle East as something that would be difficult to achieve. On Iran (Ms Schaake (Verts/ALE, NL)), she said that Pakistan was trying to improve relations and acknowledged that any country had the right to develop a peaceful nuclear programme.

## **II. Topical debate: situation in Egypt - in the presence of Bernardino León, EU Special Representative for the Southern Mediterranean Region**

Mr León, EU Special Representative (EUSR) for the Southern Mediterranean Region, summarised the latest events in Egypt, from the publication of the presidential decree conferring new powers on the President to the approval of the Constitution to be submitted to a referendum and the ensuing street protests.

He expressed concern at the deepening of the triangular political divide between the President, the judiciary and the opposition parties. He said that the High Representative, the EEAS and the EUSR were in close contact with the main political players, sending a consistent message, i.e. a call to build a strong consensus and avoid any institutional clash. He noted that the presidential decree did not go in this direction and was therefore a mistake. He deplored it all the more because it had come just after the successful first meeting of the EU-Egypt Task Force. He concluded that the EU's response to the present crisis should be "more Europe", more involvement and more engagement, because Europe was in a unique position to support the democratic transition of Egypt.

During the debate that followed, MEPs expressed grave concern at the present situation in Egypt and most speakers were fairly critical of the EU's stance. M. Panzeri (S&D, IT) called on the EU to react firmly to President Morsi's strategy, that was clearly aimed at getting new powers: the EU needed to be outspoken and establish strict conditionality. Ms Schaake (Verts/ALE, NL) deplored the weak reaction to the Presidential decree by the EU, which had only seen fit to publish a declaration on recovery of assets. In her view, the time had come to issue threats against Egypt, by applying the principle of "more for more". She concluded that this would be a true test of how serious the EU was in applying conditionality to its financial aid. Mr Atkins (ECR, UK) felt that the EU had been too close, too soon, to President Morsi and wondered how the EUSR could call for more engagement under the present circumstances. Mr Posselt (EPP, DE) was worried about the EU's sense of realism (or lack of it) and said that the EU should be under no illusions about its capacity to wield any influence over countries to which the Copenhagen criteria could not apply. Mr Salafranca (EPP, ES) wondered whether EU aid would be suspended, should the new Constitution be adopted by referendum.

Others were more cautious in their assessment of the present situation. Ms Neyts (ALDE, BE) was embarrassed that President Morsi had made such a move just a few days after the meeting of the Task Force. She recalled the mistake the West had made with Algeria and hoped it would not make the same mistake with Egypt. Mr Yañez (S&D, ES) told his fellow MEPs who were insisting on a hard line approach that it was too early for this.

In his reply the EUSR, Mr Léon, stressed that the principle of conditionality and "more for more" was already applied by the EU, and that Egypt was well aware of it. He reminded MEPs that EU engagement was not with one person - the President - but with a whole country and the Task Force was a unique tool, enabling the EU to be involved and to help the country to face long-term challenges such as youth unemployment. Concerning the new Constitution, he said it was too early for a global assessment, but the problem was what was missing from it - namely, women's rights - rather than its actual content. Concerning possible amendments to it, Mr Léon referred to a number of alternative proposals put forward, but he insisted on the Egyptian ownership of the process: the EU could lend its support, but could not itself suggest any proposal.

### III. Reports

#### a) 2012 progress report on Serbia

AFET/7/11170, 2012/2868(RSP)

*Rapporteur: Jelko Kacin (ALDE)*

Mr Kacin (ALDE, SI) said that this was the most positive report he had ever drafted on Serbia. He noted the progress Serbia had made on dialogue with Kosovo and said that both sides should be encouraged to pursue the normalisation of their relations; he pointed out that the prospect of EU membership had been a major factor in the progress achieved by Serbia. Despite the problems still to be solved, such as corruption and war crimes impunity, he called on the Council to set a date to start accession negotiations.

The draft report was welcomed by the shadow rapporteurs. Only Ms Koppa (S&D, EL), while supporting the request to set a date, felt that the report was too focused on Serbia's relations with Kosovo. Mr Preda (EPP, RO) regretted that the EU was asking more of Serbia than it was asking of its own members, and called on the Commission to spell out what "normalisation of relations" with Kosovo meant. The Commission representative acknowledged that Serbia's new leadership was matching its words with deeds. On the normalisation of relations with Kosovo, he said that it entailed a step-by-step approach and welcomed the fact that the High-Level Dialogue was getting results.

Taking the floor again at the end of the debate, the rapporteur replied to Ms Koppa, saying that Kosovo was a major issue when dealing with Serbia and that was reflected in his report. He added that it was helpful that the five Member States which did not recognise Kosovo were also opposed to the partition of Serbia.

*Deadline for tabling amendments: 9 January 2013, 12.00*

**b) European Integration Process of Kosovo**

AFET/7/11171, 2012/2867(RSP)

*Rapporteur: Ulrike Lunacek (Verts/ALE)*

Ms Lochbihler (Verts/ALE, DE), speaking on behalf of the rapporteur, outlined the main points of the draft report, which argued that a stabilisation and association agreement could be concluded with Kosovo, despite the differing views on the status of Kosovo. She added that the report called for the elimination of parallel structures and for the fight against corruption, a serious problem in Kosovo as well as in the whole region, to be stepped up. Mr Tannock (ECR, UK) disapproved the report's request that the five Members which did not recognise Kosovo should do so, arguing that it was the sovereign right of a State and the EU should not interfere. Mr Posselt (EPP, DE), however, urged his fellow MEPs not to reopen the debate on Kosovo's status, as the EP had already overwhelmingly adopted a position in favour of Kosovo's independence in previous resolutions. Mr Panzeri (S&D, IT) noted that Kosovo still had a long way to go before European integration and it had to strengthen its sovereignty. The Commission representative said that continuing the dialogue with Belgrade would have a key effect on the continuation and development of EU-Kosovo relations.

*Deadline for tabling amendments: 9 January 2013, 12.00*

**c) 2012 progress report on Iceland**

AFET/7/11147, 2012/2863(RSP)

*Rapporteur: Cristian Dan Preda (EPP)*

Deadline for tabling amendments: 18 December 2012, 18.00

*This item was postponed owing to lack of time.*

#### IV. Votes

**a) Corporate Social Responsibility: promoting society's interests and a route to sustainable and inclusive recovery**

AFET/7/09584, 2012/2097(INI) COM(2011)0681[01]

*Rapporteur for the opinion: Andrzej Grzyb (EPP)*

Responsible: EMPL\* – Richard Howitt (S&D)

The opinion, as modified by a number of amendments, was adopted by 42 votes in favour, 1 against and 2 abstentions.

**b) Corporate Social Responsibility: accountable, transparent and responsible business behaviour and sustainable growth**

AFET/7/09594, 2012/2098(INI) COM(2011)0681[02]

*Rapporteur for the opinion: Andrzej Grzyb (EPP)*

Responsible: JURI\* – Raffaele Baldassarre (EPP)

The AFET committee decided not to vote on this opinion, on the assumption that the result would be identical to the previous vote (see point a)).

**c) Motion for a resolution to wind up the debate on statements by the Council and the Commission on the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Iraq**

AFET/7/10957, 2012/2850(RSP)

*Rapporteur: Mario Mauro (EPP)*

The motion for a resolution was adopted unanimously, with 2 abstentions.

**d) Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Iraq**

AFET/7/04458, \*\*\* 2010/0310(NLE) 10209/2012 – C7-0189/2012

*Rapporteur: Mario Mauro (EPP)*

The recommendation was adopted unanimously, with 2 abstentions.

e) **The integration of migrants, its effects on the labour market and the external dimension of social security coordination**

AFET/7/09933, 2012/2131(INI) COM(2012)0153

*Rapporteur for the opinion: Cristian Dan Preda (EPP)*

Responsible: EMPL\* – Nadja Hirsch (ALDE)

V. **Next meeting(s)**

10 December 2012, 18.30 – 20.00 (Strasbourg)

10 December 2012, 20.00 – 20.30 (Strasbourg)

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