



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 6 March 2013

7194/13

**PE 111
PESC 264
COASI 31
COHOM 36
RELEX 194
COEST 48**

NOTE

from: General Secretariat of the Council
to: Delegations

Subject: Summary record of the joint meeting of the European Parliament **Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET)**, held in Brussels on 5 March 2013
Chair: Mr Brok (EPP, DE)

I. Exchange of views with H.E. U Thein Sein, President of Myanmar, and U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of Myanmar, on the ongoing reforms and the challenges ahead in Myanmar (*jointly with the Development Committee*)

The President of Myanmar thanked the EU for having suspended the sanctions but called for their total lifting, as a means of increasing investor confidence, boosting growth and jobs and improving the prosperity of people. He said that the ceasefire agreement concluded with rebel groups was the first step towards a lasting peace.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs said that he was grateful for the EU's constructive attitude towards Myanmar and reiterated the request to lift all sanctions still in force albeit suspended. He also asked for the withdrawal of draft resolutions tabled at the UNGA and at the UNHRC because, in his view, they were no longer relevant following the democratic change in the country. He acknowledged that the EU still had a number of concerns *vis-à-vis* Myanmar, but he considered that issues such as national reconciliation and unity were internal affairs to be resolved in the framework of the rule of law, without foreign interference. Finally, he gave Members reassurances about Myanmar's determination to go ahead with the reform process and make it irreversible.

Members welcomed the democratic change in the country but focused on problems still existing. Ms Striffler (EPP, FR) underscored that the humanitarian situation remained serious. Ms Lochbihler (Greens/EFA, DE) welcomed the promise of the government to allow the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to set up an office in the country, but deplored the fact that human rights violations still took place. She called for all the political prisoners to be freed and for forced labour to be ended. Ms Gomes (S&D, PT) focused on the functioning of democracy, still considered rather weak, with a parliament lacking basic scrutiny powers. Ms Kiil-Nielsen (Greens/EFA, FR) considered that discrimination against minorities - and notably the Rohingya minority - was the root cause of problems in Myanmar and she also called for the emergence of an active civil society.

The Minister replied by saying that Myanmar's democracy was still young and the parliamentary system was only in its infancy, but the political leadership was committed to strengthening the democratic process. Concerning the situation of minorities, he declared that the government would do its utmost to keep peace and stability in the country.

II. Debrief by Milan Cabrnoch on the EU-Georgia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee in Brussels from 25-26 February 2013

Mr Cabrnoch (ECR, CZ) explained the difficult transition that was taking place in Georgia from a presidential to a parliamentary system as well as the extremely tense political situation. While the October elections were democratic, he said, the political situation since then was a cause for concern. This had repercussions for the EU-Georgia PCC which was unable to approve a final statement because of the opposition of the Georgian delegation to the draft text.

Mr Brok (EPP, DE) said that he had been in the country in December and had spoken afterwards to a number of interlocutors, all of whom shared the same feeling, i.e. that the country was dramatically going in the wrong direction, i.e. towards a one-party state. He deplored the fact that the clear statements by the High Representative and Commissioner Füle had not been properly understood in the country. He also considered that, if Georgia had to be added to Ukraine as a country about which the EU had a number of serious concerns, the summit in Vilnius would be put in danger. All the strategic goals of the EU neighbourhood policy that were indeed being called into question.

Chair Brok closed the meeting saying that he would ask the Conference of Presidents to add an item to the agenda of the next plenary, i.e. a statement by the High Representative on the situation in Georgia.

V. Next meeting(s)

20 March 2013, 9.00 – 12.30 and 15.00 – 18.30 (Brussels)
