



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 28 June 2013

11726/13

**PE 327
PESC 806
MIGR 70
VISA 142
COEST 175
COHOM 141
IRAN 1**

NOTE

from: General Secretariat of the Council
to: Delegations

Subject: Summary record of the meeting of the European Parliament **Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET)** held in Brussels on 27 June 2013
Chairs: Mr Pöttering (EPP, DE), Mr Brok (EPP, DE)

I. Exchange of views with Catherine Ashton, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission, on the Foreign Affairs Council of 24 June and on recent foreign policy developments

In her introductory speech the High Representative dealt with the issues that had been discussed at the last FAC.

First, Turkey. She restated the EU position and insisted on the importance of keeping the dialogue open so as to have an important leverage vis-à-vis Turkey. She considered that the decision on the opening of Chapter 22 was a sensible solution which kept up momentum but at the same time recognised the present situation.

On Eastern Partnership, Lady Ashton underlined the importance of keeping the Ministers of those countries involved in the preparation of the summit, so as to develop a sense of ownership and to manage expectations. She also indicated that discussions were ongoing on the post-Vilnius roadmap.

The High Representative mentioned climate change as one of the horizontal, general issues that she had brought to the attention of the FAC over recent months.

On the Middle East peace process, she mentioned the support expressed by the FAC to SoS Kerry and the debriefing she had given Ministers on her recent visit to the region.

She informed the committee that over lunch the FAC had discussed Afghanistan with NATO SG Rasmussen.

On Syria, Ministers had expressed support for the Geneva process and discussed the massive humanitarian needs, as well as how to rebuild the nation.

The High Representative then turned to the Serbia-Kosovo dialogue and said that the process was becoming irreversible but still needed support. She called on the EP to help in making it understood by the population on the ground.

During the debate that followed, Mr Salafranca (EPP, ES) voiced his concern over the 12.5% decrease in the 2014 draft budget for EU external action. Lady Ashton explained that this move was mainly due to the reduced development aid given to countries less in need of it. Ms Gomes (S&D, PT) regretted that the FAC had not adopted conclusions on the MEPP and hoped that rumours circulated in the media on a possible Israeli lobby to this end were false. The High Representative replied that she did not care what the press had said. Ministers had discussed at length on how to proceed and it was decided not to have conclusions as there was a real possibility for some progress thanks to Mr Kerry's diplomatic efforts. That - Lady Ashton added - did not change an inch her position on settlements or the substance of Council conclusions adopted in the past. On Syria, some called for Iran's participation in the Geneva II process and Mr Kacin (ALDE, SI) called for a balanced EU approach so as to avoid a new Bosnia. The High Representative defended the

EU position by saying that there was unity on support for the political solution. Divisions were over how to get there: some were in favour of supporting the opposition, others were afraid that that would end up in an escalation of violence. But unity on the political process, albeit a lengthy one, was crucial, she concluded. On the role of the Gulf States (Ms Brantner (Greens/EFA, DE)), she said that she would meet them at the upcoming GCC meeting. A few Members raised the issue of the Court of Auditors' (CoA) report on EU assistance to Egypt, voicing their concerns both over the substance and over the negative impact of the report on CFSP (and EU) image. The High Representative welcomed the critical review made by the CoA but regretted that the EEAS comments were not reflected in its report. She noted that political transitions usually took place in chaos and were not done overnight. On Egypt, Ms Brantner and Ms Schaake were worried by the human rights situation and Ms Schaake regretted that the latest High Representative's statement had made no reference to this issue. Lady Ashton firmly invited her to look not at one single statement but at all of them together and at many other demarches which were not public but proved her commitment to human rights. Mr Pöttering (EPP, DE) invited Lady Ashton to pay particular attention to restrictive laws on NGOs around the world. She acknowledged that these were indeed a growing problem, and were in some countries the result of a simple misunderstanding on the role of foreign NGOs, while in others they were adopted on purpose to make NGOs' work impossible. Many MEPs commended Lady Ashton for the role she played in the Serbia-Kosovo dialogue and some asked what was coming next (Mr Kokan (EPP, SK)). She replied that the focus now was on implementation and on a number of issues still to be solved. She added that negotiations were almost complete in the telecommunications area and some progress had been made as far as energy was concerned.

II. Debate on the situation in Iran after the presidential elections

This item was held in camera. See separate document.

XI. Votes

a) EU-Armenia Agreement on the facilitation of the issuance of visas

AFET/7/11497 *** 2012/0334(NLE) 05835/2013 – C7-0112/2013

Rapporteur for the opinion: Tomasz Piotr Poręba (ECR)

Responsible: LIBE – Edit Bauer (EPP)

The opinion was unanimously adopted with two abstentions

b) Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Armenia on the readmission of persons residing without authorisation

AFET/7/11512, *** 2012/0332(NLE) 05859/2013 – C7-0113/2013

Rapporteur for the opinion: Tomasz Piotr Poręba (ECR)

Responsible: LIBE – Edit Bauer (EPP)

Opinions: AFET –

The opinion was adopted by 28 votes in favour, one against and one abstention.

XII. Next meeting(s)

- 1 July 2013, 18.30 – 20.00 (Strasbourg)
- 8 July 2013, 15.00 – 18.30 (Brussels)
- 9 July 2013, 9.00 – 12.30 and 15.00 – 18.30 (Brussels)