



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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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 2 September 2013
Chair: Mr Brok (EPP, DE)

I. Exchange of views with Michael Davenport, newly appointed Head of the EU Delegation to Serbia

This item was debated in camera. Please see separate report.

II. Reports

a) The future of EU-ASEAN relations

AFET/7/13296, 2013/2148(INI)

Rapporteur: Reinhard Bütikofer (Verts/ALE, DE)

Deadline for tabling amendments: 10 September 2013, 12.00

The rapporteur made it clear that his report did not cover relations with individual members of ASEAN, which were already dealt with in the PCAs reports. He considered that the EU did not demonstrate sufficient interest as regards ASEAN and that closer contacts therefore needed to be established, not only at a political level. The security dimension of EU-ASEAN cooperation and cultural exchanges needed to be further developed. The rapporteur proposed the establishment of an EU-ASEAN parliamentary assembly and invited colleagues to give their opinion on this.

The EPP and S&D shadow rapporteurs both welcomed the report and concurred with the rapporteur's call for deeper economic and cultural integration. However, the S&D was more cautious on the proposal to strengthen cooperation in the security field. The GUE/NGL shadow rapporteur questioned the added value of a more stable relationship. For the ECR group, Ms De Martini (IT) was critical of the draft report. She argued that while the EU was very generous as regards financial assistance to ASEAN countries, the latter preferred to sign trade agreements with other Asian partners. The idea of an EU-ASEAN parliamentary assembly was welcomed by all groups except ECR, which highlighted two major problems. These were, on the one hand, the high costs generated by such bodies which would be borne by the EU taxpayer, and, on the other hand, the lack of genuine democracy, and indeed a parliament, in some ASEAN Member States.

The EEAS representative warmly welcomed the draft report as well as the thinking behind it. He said that the EEAS had worked hard in the last years to strengthen EU-ASEAN relations.

b) European Neighbourhood Policy, working towards a stronger partnership: EP's position on the 2012 progress reports

AFET/7/13314, 2013/2621(RSP)

Rapporteur: Jacek Saryusz-Wolski (PPE, PL)

Corapporteur(s): Pier Antonio Panzeri (S&D, IT)

Deadline for tabling amendments: 5 September 2013, 12.00

Mr Saryusz-Wolski (EPP, PL), rapporteur for the Eastern Partnership, recalled that his part of the draft report had to be updated in the light of the enormous pressure put by Russia on Eastern countries over the summer. He said that his report examined the Eastern Partnership as a whole. He invited the EP to use this report as a tool for parliamentary diplomacy in the run-up to the Vilnius summit. Mr Panzeri (S&D, IT), rapporteur for the Southern Neighbourhood, underlined the challenges faced by the region over the past two years as well as the on-going nature of the transition.

As regards Syria, he considered that public opinion was at last taking a stance, as indicated by the vote in the House of Commons. He reiterated the view that a military intervention was not going to solve anything.

The draft report was well received, although some questioned whether the two dimensions of the ENP should be dealt with in the same report. Not all political groups shared the same views on the ENP. Mr Schölz (GUE/NGL, DE) argued that the Eastern Partnership was a global failure: it provided no incentives other than the financial incentive. He added that the "one size fits all" approach was not working. As far as the South was concerned, he felt that it was unrealistic for the report to request that relevant countries should adopt reforms. It would have been preferable for the report to have stated what the EP had requested from the Council and the Commission. However, Mr Siwiec (S&D, PL) believed that the ENP was an overall success, although he conceded that it was not perfect. Mr Tannock (ECR, UK) said that from the very inception of the policy ten years ago, he had warned that a "one size fits all" paradigm was not practicable. Ms Neyts (ALDE, BE) questioned whether democracy could be exported through the simple expedient of providing funding. She noted that it was not the ENP that could provide easy answers for Egypt. A number of MEPs spoke on the subject of specific countries, in particular Egypt, Ukraine and Georgia, and made a number of different comments on the political situation.

Mr Panzeri's closing remarks were critical of the EU's tendency to establish the right priorities while failing to deliver, for example, in respect of budget allocations. To those who questioned the very foundations of the ENP, he replied that it was a useful policy because ultimately it was an investment directed at solving Europe's problems. Mr Saryusz-Wolski made it clear that this report was not meant to solve all problems related to the ENP, nor to change the policy fundamentally. Instead, its purpose was to highlight problems and offer suggestions as to their resolution at a time when many countries that were relevant to the policy were at a crossroads.

c) General budget of the European Union for the financial year 2014 - all sections

AFET/7/13252, 2013/2145(BUD)

Rapporteur for the opinion: José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra (EPP, ES)

Responsible: BUDG – Monika Hohlmeier (EPP, DE), Anne E. Jensen (ALDE, DK)

The AFET rapporteur insisted on the need to return to the level of 2013 appropriations: he criticised cuts in elections observation, partnership instruments, DCI and other areas, which had rendered impossible respect for some of the commitments subscribed by the EEAS.

The budget, he concluded, had to be adequate in order to deliver the objectives set. Ms Muñiz (S&D, ES) regretted the level of the Council's cuts, while Ms Lösing (GUE/NGL, DE) admitted that she could agree to cuts in military spending and the reduction of waste in other areas.

d) Budgetary management of European Union pre-accession funds in the areas of judicial systems and the fight against corruption in the candidate and potential candidate countries

AFET/7/05333, 2011/2033(INI)

Rapporteur for the opinion: Jelko Kacin (ALDE, SI)

Responsible: CONT – Monica Luisa Macovei (EPP, RO)

On behalf of the rapporteur, Ms Neyts (ALDE, BE) insisted on the importance of the training of judges, on acting early on judicial reform and on involving the parliament of the beneficiary country in the implementation of pre-accession funds. On behalf of Mr Kukan (EPP, SK), Mr Salafranca (EPP, ES) raised the issue of the absorption capacity of the recipient country. Ms Gomes (S&D, PT), on behalf of Ms Koppa (S&D, EL), suggested supporting NGOs active in the field of the fight against corruption. The Commission's representative stated that in the new Commission's negotiation strategy, chapters 23 and 24 on the judiciary were opened at the beginning of the process because they were crucial for the entire process of European integration. He added that in the IPA II draft Regulation, allocations could be adjusted according to progress. He said that absorption capacity had been taken into account. He also said that candidate countries needed to demonstrate a genuine change in mentality. But that this could take time.

e) Protocol to the Euro-Mediterranean EC-Jordan Association Agreement on an EU-Jordan Framework Agreement on general principles for the participation of Jordan in Union programmes

AFET/7/09648, *** 2012/0108(NLE) 12138/2012 – C7-0008/2013

Rapporteur: Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck (ALDE, BE)

Consideration of draft recommendation (consent)

Deadline for tabling amendments: 4 September 2013, 12.00

The rapporteur said that, in view of the spill-over effects of the Syrian conflict, it was particularly important that the EP gave a broad consent to this agreement. Ms De Keyser (S&D, BE) concurred, but regretted that Jordan still banned Palestinians refugees from entering its territory, although it had accepted a large number of Syrian refugees.

III. Chair's announcements

The Chair announced that the secretariat had prepared a draft motion for resolution on Egypt and Syria to be considered by political groups the following week in Strasbourg. He noted that a number of Members were sceptical about having a resolution and preferred to keep all the options open at this moment of great uncertainty. He said that a better alternative to an urgent resolution could be the option of inviting Commission Füle to a debate on Wednesday on the Neighbourhood Policy: Egypt, Syria and Ukraine - all of them neighbouring countries - could be addressed in this framework.

IV. Next meeting(s)

- 4 September 2013, 9.00 – 10.00 (Brussels)
