



**COUNCIL OF
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NOTE

from:	General Secretariat of the Council
to:	Delegations
Subject:	Summary record of the meeting of the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) with the Subcommittee on Human Rights and the Delegation for relations with the countries of Southeast Asia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) held in Strasbourg on 21 October 2013 - Chair: Mr Brok (EPP, DE)

Exchange of views with Aung San Suu Kyi, winner of the 1990 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought

The chair Elmar Brok (EPP, DE) said that he was proud to receive Aung San Suu Kyi in the committee. He was pleased to see active exchanges between the EP and the parliament in Myanmar.

Ms Striffler (EPP, FR) said that Myanmar had experienced 23 difficult years. She stressed that cooperating with Myanmar would be difficult. It was still one of the least developed countries. Generally she called for more to help strengthen democracy. She stressed that the country had a great future, and that the EP would remain a strong partner. She underlined that Myanmar would benefit from the 2014-2020 aid programme.

Aung San Suu Kyi pointed out that the path to democracy has not been finished yet. The lives of ordinary people had changed very little over the past three years. She underlined the uncertainties which people had encountered since independence. Furthermore, she alluded to several cease fires which had failed. Therefore, the country had never been at peace. She made clear that the creation of a federal union could only go hand in hand with changes to the constitution. In the same vein she pointed out that the current constitution is not democratic and had to be amended. The amendments to the constitution were the main challenges in the process of democratic transition in Myanmar. In order to amend the constitution it was essential to get the agreement of the military. She stressed that without the support of the military no significant changes could be achieved. She underlined the unique opportunity to change the constitution because the committee for the reassessment of the constitution was currently taking place. The status of universities was not satisfactory and needed to be improved. She urged the EP to emphasise to the regime the need for constitutional change.

Ms Lochbihler (Greens/EFA, DE) chair of the human rights committee stressed the importance of the ethnic minorities living in Myanmar. She welcomed the release of some political prisoners. However, she also mentioned that human rights defenders were still being arrested. She underlined the importance of involving civil society. She hoped that the UN Human Rights Office could open an office soon in Myanmar.

Mr Langen (EPP, DE) head of the ASEAN delegation said that there were signs of hope for the democratisation process. He highlighted the EU's intention to lift some sanctions. However, he underlined that as long as the military had guaranteed seats in the parliament, the country would not be entirely free. He called for the use of all resources available to invest in infrastructure.

In answering questions from committee members, Aung San Suu Kyi said that it was not certain that the democratisation process was irreversible. She stressed the importance of the government's responsibility with regards to resource exploitation by foreign companies. She stated that the democratisation process should be viewed as a package. Furthermore, she underlined the need for a democratic culture in Myanmar. The rights of minorities needed to be protected by the state. Permanent political settlement could only be achieved through long negotiations with ethnic groups. She stressed that the military must be part of the democratisation process. She made clear that the 2015 elections could not be fair unless the constitution had been changed before hand. She welcomed any EU election monitoring in the 2015 elections.