



Subject: urgent evacuation of Afghan staff working for EU missions and programmes

Brussels, 25 August 2021

Dear President Von der Leyen,
Dear HR/VP Borrell,

We write you to express our highest possible concern about the progress of the evacuation efforts of Afghan former staff of EU missions and programmes currently still present in Afghanistan. Given the rapid deterioration and unpredictability of the situation in the country, it is of utmost importance that the EU coordinates a rapid and inclusive evacuation of all persons who cooperated with the EU as they are under a direct life-threatening situation after the Taliban takeover.

Especially given the potential deadline set by the Taliban for international troops to leave the country by Aug. 31, great uncertainty exists about the situation subsequent this date. Access to Kabul International Airport as well as the overall security situation in the country are likely to even further deteriorate, making evacuation efforts considerably harder, if not impossible. Therefore, the EU should use everything within its merit to evacuate as many persons as possible before this date.

However, worrying signals are reaching us about the pace of the EU's evacuation efforts of Afghan former mission staff. A concrete example is the European Union Police Mission in Afghanistan (EUPOL), where many of the former local staff is still present in the country and under Taliban threat. We were informed that a list of 131 persons (former EUPOL staff and their family members) was submitted by the former head of mission already in July, but CSDP administration allegedly is still working on the bureaucratic requirements for the departure of these persons. In the meantime, some EU Member States have included a part of them in their evacuation actions.

The problem with the evacuation of EUPOL staff members is not the only gap in the EU's evacuation of locals who assisted EU missions. Member States' efforts are focussing on the local staff which cooperated with their national embassies or projects. We therefore urge you to make the evacuation of Afghan staff working directly for EU missions and programmes, including those working for implementing partners, and their families, the absolute priority. It is the responsibility of the EU to ensure the safety of the staff members who made our missions possible.

We urge you to undertake immediate action by stepping up the coordination of an EU response in cooperation with the Member States. Given the extremely short time that is left, we exceptionally ask you to inform the Parliament within 48 hours about the categories of persons that have been or are being evacuated, and about the measures taken to guarantee timely evacuations that are not yet planned.

Thank you in advance for your response.

Kind Regards,

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