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Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Borrell i Fontelles
on behalf of the European Commission
(31.10.2024)

The recent appalling so-called law on the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice of the Taliban confirms and extends severe restrictions on the life of Afghans, and in particular women and girls. The EU has clearly condemned the so-called law¹, and continues to use all its tools to support Afghan women and girls, starting with its assistance, delivered under a ‘by women for women’ approach – ensuring women play a meaningful role in all aspects of aid interventions². The EU is also engaged with Afghanistan civil society and – through principled engagement based on the five benchmarks set by the Council³ – with Taliban representatives. The EU seizes every opportunity to both concretely support and advocate for the fundamental rights of Afghan women and girls.

The EU’s basic needs and livelihoods’ assistance resumed during the last trimester of 2023 after reinforced monitoring systems demonstrated that delivering assistance in a principled manner was feasible.

In parallel, the EU and the entire international community have already taken strong political action against the Taliban, uniting in refusing to officially recognise the Taliban regime and in agreeing that such recognition (as stated in the United Nations’ independent assessment⁴ of which the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2721⁵ took positive note), can only happen once the Taliban fully respect international obligations, including on human rights. The EU is fully engaged in the ongoing United Nations-led process, which aims to reach such objective.

The EU has also adopted restrictive measures⁶ against Taliban senior representatives under the EU’s Global Human Rights Sanctions regime.

¹ On 26 August 2024, the High-Representative/Vice-President issued a statement on behalf of the EU to strongly condemn the law, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2024/08/26/afghanistan-statement-of-the-high-representative-on-behalf-of-the-eu-on-latest-restrictions-imposed-by-the-taliban-on-the-people/?utm_source=brevo&utm_campaign=AUTOMATED%20-%20Alert%20-%20Newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_id=320

² For further information on EU assistance see Directorate General for International Partnerships, website: https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/countries/afghanistan_en; and Directorate General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, website: https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/where/asia-and-pacific/afghanistan_en

³ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-11713-2021-REV-2/en/pdf>

⁴ https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/2023_11_sg_special_assessment_report.pdf

⁵ <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/2721>

⁶ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L:2023:069I:FULL>; <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L:2023:183I:FULL>