

*Strasbourg, Tuesday, June 12*

*Debate:*

Pino Arlacchi, on behalf of the S&D Group . – Mr President, I listened carefully to Mrs Ashton's statement and I am not happy about what she said.

Mrs Ashton, you spoke on the report on Afghanistan by this Parliament as if it was released a couple of weeks ago. We are talking about a report which was approved by this Parliament in December 2010, so I would have preferred to have heard from you something about the implementation of the report in the past year and a half.

You spoke a great deal about things to be done in Afghanistan. Some of them are absolutely reasonable and right, but you did not mention two major issues that were contained in my report: firstly, the issue of the peace process. What to do with the peace process in Afghanistan is the crucial political point for the future of the country, particularly now that the military occupation is ending.

The second point was the narcotics issue: the only reference you made to that was that crop substitution alone cannot solve the drug problem. Of course; but no one would dissent in any way from this statement. The report contained a very detailed call for a five-year plan to eliminate opium production in Afghanistan through alternative development. This plan has never been carried out in Afghanistan; it was urgent two years ago and it is more urgent now that opium production is still continuing to increase.

We developed also a relationship with the Russian Federation – along with Europe the major victim of Afghan opium. We had here the internal contacts responsible for the Russian Federation and we developed ideas and plans. Russia was also ready to fund, to co-fund with the EU, a plan to eliminate opium production. Nothing happened; we never had from your office any answer to that.

These are the reasons I am not happy.