Wednesday, 12 June 2013 - Strasbourg

Debate

Pino Arlacchi, on behalf of the S&D Group . – Madam President, I am the rapporteur for the EU-Afghanistan cooperation agreement. We asked for its addition at this point on the agenda because, despite the obligation to inform Parliament at all stages of the negotiation, we have not been properly informed. On several occasions, together with the shadow rapporteurs, we indicated the priorities we would like to see included in the agreement but unfortunately we have not received any significant feedback.

Our requests are well-known. They are supported by the majority of this Parliament and are included in reports and resolutions approved by this House since 2010. The first concern we raised about the negotiations for the agreement was about the quality of international aid and the efficiency of its delivery chain. Between 2002 and the end of 2011, the EU alone committed a total of EUR 2.5 billion in civilian assistance to Afghanistan, but the impact of this has been extremely limited. We pointed out that 70-80 % of the aid channelled through international organisations and NGOs never reached the Afghan population.

Our second point of concern, which we reiterated, was our wish to see the creation of a five-year opium elimination plan through alternative development, a plan to be implemented through a dedicated office with its own budget and staff and on the basis of close cooperation between the EU and the Russian Federation, whose population has become a major victim of Afghan heroin. Such a plan is very urgent, because the huge amount of international money used for counter-narcotics measures in Afghanistan has had no significant impact on production and trafficking.

To conclude, I hope that the EAS will now finally include our concerns in the agreement under negotiation.

[source: www.europarl.europa.eu]