

Bruxelles, 28 giu. 2011

The S&D Group conference on "A NEW STRATEGY FOR AFGHANISTAN" aimed to follow up on the report adopted by the European Parliament in December 2010 and to discuss ways of working together for a stable and prosperous Afghanistan .

The positive atmosphere of this event, organised with the participation of key regional and international figures, sent an important political message.

Said Thijs Berman, Chair of the EP delegation for relations with Afghanistan :

"The discussions today and yesterday proved again that there is no military solution for Afghanistan , as no lasting peace and stability can be achieved in the country without significant results in development and poverty reduction.

"The EU and its member states, providing around EUR 1bn in development aid to Afghanistan each year, must continue supporting these efforts.

"However, the EU should also insist on building strong Afghan institutions, a strong judiciary and a strong parliament in particular. The current actions taken by the Afghan presidency against the Wolesi Jirga, using unconstitutional methods invalidating newly elected members, are counterproductive. We should stop blindfolding ourselves and tackle corruption from top to bottom in Afghanistan , if we are serious about working on a better future for the country."

Said Pino Arlacchi, EP Rapporteur on Afghanistan :

"Eliminating opium production in Afghanistan can only be achieved through offering

credible and sustainable alternatives to farmers.

“The EP report calls for a five-year plan, with specific deadlines and benchmarks, for eliminating illicit crops in the country through eradication practices that avoid non-manual and non-mechanical means.

“Conference participants welcomed and supported the idea of setting up an international steering committee with the participation of the Afghan government, the European Union, Russia and the United States , as well as other interested donors, to work on guidelines for this plan, which should be implemented by the Afghan government.”