



DIRECTORATE ASIA & PACIFIC
ASIAPAC.2: Pakistan, Afghanistan
The Head of Division

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Ares (2021) 6319136

Anu Viks

Executive Member of Business Professional Women (BPW) International
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Dear Ms Viks,

I thank you for your e-mail of 25 August to Ms Helena Dalli, EU Commissioner for Equality, who has asked me to reply to you on her behalf.

Wholeheartedly sharing your concern for women's rights in Afghanistan, the European Union services are having an in-depth consideration on how to effectively promote fundamental rights and freedoms in the current new political reality in Afghanistan.

I wish to underline that the protection of human rights, with special relevance to the rights of women and girls, remains a top political priority for the EU in Afghanistan, as the EU leaders have reaffirmed on several occasions, including in multilateral fora.

In terms of financial assistance, the EU's humanitarian assistance for Afghanistan has recently been almost quadrupled for 2021. While development cooperation activities are being put on hold, the EU seeks to continue working with UN agencies and civil society organizations, as conditions allow. In the current extremely difficult humanitarian and economic situation, EU funding is and will be heavily focusing on the provision of basic services, such as health and education, in which contexts women and girls are considered priority beneficiaries. The EU also increased its allocation to address the needs of Afghans at specific risks of Taliban reprisals, such as human rights defenders, woman activists, etc., which is being mobilized to its full potential.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tomas Niklasson', written over a horizontal line.

Tomas NIKLASSON