Italy-Turkey: Terzi-Davutoglu meeting – Syria: support for new opposition alliance

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The Syrian crisis was among the main topics of discussion between Minister Giulio Terzi and his Turkish colleague Ahmet Davutoglu at Villa Madama in Rome. The two ministers expressed their support for the new opposition alliance established at Doha. Terzi personally congratulated the president and vice president of the new alliance Moaz Al Khateeb and Rias Seif, underscoring this as “a significant step toward a political solution to the Syrian crisis”.

20 million euro for refugees

On the other hand, Italy will not lend military support to the opposition, Terzi specified during the meeting, responding to the question of whether this agreement among the opposition forces would make Italy willing to supply arms, as the rebels are requesting. “The Italian government’s position”, he explained, “remains unaltered: we do not intend to intervene militarily in any way at national level, and do not recognize the conditions for collective international intervention, since consensus has not been forthcoming in the Security Council”. On the humanitarian front, Terzi announced that Italy “has identified €20 million as the funds necessary in the coming months to aid Syrian refugees in Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon, but also those inside the country itself”.

For his part, Turkish minister Davutoglu asserted that with the formation of the new Syrian opposition coalition “we have a counterpart, the international community has no more excuses”. “We recognize this structure, and the rest of the world must engage in dialogue”, he added, underscoring that in the face of “such a violent regime, the Security Council has been inert”.

Falling within the context of frequent contacts between the two nations, the meeting also offered an opportunity to examine excellent existing bilateral relations and follows closely on a second intergovernmental summit held in Rome in May of this year, at which a series of accords were signed on themes including social security, the fight against organized crime and environmental protection. Terzi pointed out excellent trade relations that showed an increase in 2011 of 28% and that are holding steady in the current year at approximately $20 million.

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“Italy is Turkey’s advocate in the EU system”, Davutoglu explained, thanking Terzi particularly for Italy’s support for visa liberalisation. “Each individual step forward gives new impetus to Turkey’s EU integration”, he added. For his part, Terzi assured that Italy “will continue to work in Brussels and the other capitals concerned” to secure visa liberalisation for Turkish citizens, “a process that has been too long in coming”.

Italo-Turkish dialogue forum

Terzi and Davutoglu went on to the St. Regis hotel to co-chair the Italo-Turkish Dialogue Forum organised by Unicredit and the centre for strategic studies of the Turkish foreign ministry, whose participants included civil society representatives of both countries (political, economic, financial and academic).

Source : https://www.esteri.it/en/sala_stampa/archivionotizie/approfondimenti/2012/11/20121112_terzdavsiropp/