

Remarks by the High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini at the press conference following the 12th EU-Jordan Association Council

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It has been the opportunity for us to discuss several issues that are of common concern, especially in the region, beyond what is an excellent bilateral cooperation.

Maybe I will start with the bilateral cooperation that is solid, based on a very like-minded approach, common priorities both in terms of facing challenges but also in terms of making the most out of the opportunities we can get together.

It was the opportunity to take stock of the implementation of the decisions we took, especially in the Brussels Conference on Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region. And it was also, the good news of the day, the opportunity to reciprocally welcome the agreement reached this morning on the Memorandum of Understanding for the macro-financial assistance. If I am not wrong € 200 million that, having agreed the Memorandum of Understanding, are, hopefully, - Inshallah – going to be available in the coming weeks.

This is just one of the testimonies of the strong support the European Union gives to Jordan, a country that is standing strong, resilient, in the midst of a beautiful but challenging region and it is also the result of an excellent common work that our teams have done not just in the last weeks, but in the last months and years.

Coming to the common work we do in the region: we had the opportunity to exchange views on the latest developments in the region, in the Arab world, with a particular focus on two issues that always come high on our common agenda; the crisis in Syria, where the Minister updated me on the work done on the agreement on the de-escalation zone in the South and we discussed ways in which the European Union can support this work, especially in view of the resumption of talks in Geneva this week.

We also discussed our common work and our common priority in terms of re-launching the Middle East Peace Process. Jordan and the European Union share the same approach to this file – not the only one –, the same desire to see a re-launching of the process based on the Two-State solution and we are determined to work together hand in hand for this purpose.

I will stop here, thanking you once again for the excellent cooperation – for sure I forget many other issues we cooperate on in an excellent manner.

I would also like to thank the Minister, all his delegation, His Majesty the King of Jordan, for having intensified enormously the contacts we have had at all levels; I was in Jordan just twice very recently in the last couple of months for high-level meetings. I believe that our cooperation in all files is essential and I would like to thank you.

Q: Since you discussed the situation in the region, was the crisis in the Gulf discussed in particular after your contacts Mrs Mogherini with the Kuwaiti side?

Yes we discussed the crisis, the tensions between Qatar and the four countries of the Gulf but not only, Egypt also. When it comes to the European Union, as you know we support the mediation efforts of the Emir [Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah] of Kuwait with all our means. I am constantly in contact, more than on a daily basis, with our friends and colleagues from Kuwait. I am also in contact very often with different parties; I just talked yesterday with the Foreign Minister [Sameh] Shoukry of Egypt and I know that in these hours the United States' Secretary of States is visiting Kuwait. I believe we support in the same manner the need to deescalate the tensions, the need to let the mediation efforts have the space to start engaging seriously. And when it comes to the European Union position, it is very clear and unequivocally expressed since the beginning of the crisis: we expect this issue to be solved politically. We are worried about a GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] that might come disunited out of these tensions, while the GCC is for us in itself a fundamental partner when it comes to regional crises, when it comes to counter-terrorism, when it comes to cooperation and we expect all our partners in the GCC to solve any kind of tensions through political dialogue. We are indeed concerned about obviously any move, any action or any behaviour that could give space, room or support to terrorism, regardless of where this can be done. We hope and we believe that the tensions can be resolved through the Kuwaiti mediation, with the European support, with the regional support, with the American support and also that concrete mechanisms can be found to monitor the activities that might support or give harbouring to terrorist organisations or individuals in the entire region and beyond. We believe that countering terrorism is a duty for all countries in the world and would not exclude any from this.

If I can add one word -that I think is a must for me to mention in this context- is that the European Union values enormously the Jordanian approach to prevention of radicalisation and counter-terrorism. We heard indeed words of wisdom, moderation and unity; first of all from His Majesty [King Abdullah II of Jordan] when he addressed the European Parliament in Strasbourg. I would say that the Jordanian way to prevention of

radicalisation and counter-terrorism is a way that we fully support and we have a lot to learn from. And we hope that this wisdom and moderation can be a role model also for others.

Q. Can you tell us how the European will work to enhance the implementation of the latest ceasefire sponsored by Russia and the United States in the southwest Syria? And do you see both a role for Mr. Assad? Is there no role for him in the long-term of Syria future as Mr Tillerson said two days ago? And can I ask you regarding the Gulf crisis: one month after the eruption of this crisis, do you expect this crisis to be solved soon or are you pessimistic that it might take some time?

Inshallah. We cannot work and we do not work on the assumption of optimism or pessimism. We simply work to find solutions to crises that are complex, so I cannot tell you if I expect this crisis to last long or to be solved soon. What I can tell you is that we are working to support our friends in the Gulf together with other friends and partners we have in the region and further away to try and solve it as soon as possible. We believe, in the European Union, that the longest these tensions continue, the worst it is for the entire region – and also as we share somehow the region – for the European Union. We have a clear interest in these tensions to be overcome quickly with the political means that can be put in place. And again, we fully support the mediation work that the Emir [Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah] of Kuwait is putting in place. I trust that the region itself can have and can find the necessary wisdom to find a solution to this crisis – with all the necessary support that we can give.

On Syria we discussed the agreement that was found on the de-escalation zone in the south. It is not for the European Union to implement a de-escalation zone, but there could be things that the European Union could explore and consider to support the coming back to normal life in parts of Syria, once the decisions are implemented, once we see that agreements are respected and put in place. This is something that I will discuss for sure tomorrow afternoon here in Brussels with [Russian Foreign] Minister Lavrov. And for sure, if there is a chance to strengthen such an agreement with complementary measures that the European Union can provide, we will be ready to do so. But it seems to me that we are still at a very early stage. So my message here would be to make it work, because the Syrian people deserve to have peace and a ceasefire. As the Minister [of Jordan] mentioned, this can be a first step on the way to a global ceasefire in the entire of Syria and towards the real solution which is a political agreement in Geneva. But as a first step we welcome it. As a first step we are ready to support it -if and when it is implemented- with the means we can put in place.

On Mr Assad?

I have answered so many times, the answer is always the same.

