EU Foreign Affairs Council: sanctions against Syria and Iran on the agenda

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Main topics on the agenda of the EU foreign ministers meeting in Brussels include sanctions against Syria and Iran, while, in addition to underscoring the EU's increased focus on the Mediterranean, Minister Giulio Terzi launched an appeal to Europe and the international community on behalf of the defence of Christian communities in Nigeria, which have once again become the target of attacks.

With regard to the EU oil embargo against Iran, Terzi announced that "Italy is with Europe: we are certainly with Europe", the minister asserted. "We have been an element of impetus in the application of a dual track policy", he added. The pressure will continue until "Iran returns to the negotiating table and suspends its nuclear enrichment programme". Terzi recalled that EU High Representative Catherine Ashton "is still waiting for an answer" from Iran in response to the 5+1 group's invitation to resume negotiations.

The EU's oil sanctions against Iran will be "gradual" so as to allow the market to absorb the impact. "We do not foresee any major impact on the global economy and on global supply", the minister said.

Terzi expressed "disappointment" with Syria's rejection of the Arab league plan. "The situation in Syria is of critical concern", he said. Indeed, the foreign ministers also approved new sanctions against the Syrian regime. This was the 11th set of restrictive measures.

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