Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK)

"The European Union has been a steadfast supporter of United Nations efforts"

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Mr President, Foreign Minister Linkevičius,

I would like to thank you for convening this meeting. I would also like to thank both the Secretary-General and Baroness Ashton for their statements and to express our full support for the Presidential Statement that the Council will adopt at the end of this meeting. I'd also like to say hello to some friends from Brussels, the city where my wife and I met. It is Valentine's Day.

Today's meeting is an opportunity to take stock. The European Union and its member states have a common set of objectives on matters of international peace and security. Driven by the values that have been central to European integration following the Second World War, these objectives are also evident in the cooperation between the European Union and the United Nations.

Today I wanted to focus on three themes: diplomatic engagement, responding to crises, and taking action.

First: diplomatic engagement. At the outset, I really do want to pay tribute Baroness Ashton and to her wider team for the role they have played on two critical dossiers: Iran and Kosovo.

On Iran, the United Kingdom welcomes the agreement of the Joint Plan of Action between the E3+3 and Iran. Through the Office of the High Representative, the European Union played a crucial role in this process, and we look forward to the start of negotiations on a comprehensive solution next week. It is our firm belief that skilled diplomacy has only worked because of the economic pressure brought to bear on Iran through international sanctions. In order to negotiate a comprehensive agreement, which addresses all our proliferation concerns, it is critical that this pressure is now maintained.

On Kosovo, the European Union has played an instrumental role in facilitating several rounds of talks in Brussels between the Prime Ministers of Kosovo and Serbia, which resulted in the historic 19 April agreement on the normalisation of the two countries' relations. This agreement was the result of painstaking diplomacy, the painstaking diplomacy that you have just described, and will aid the irrevocable progress of both countries towards the European

Union, a process that will have a profound and lasting impact on the stability of the Western Balkans.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Foreign Secretary has expressed already his deep concern at the violence we saw in protests last week. The protests should be a wake-up call to all of us. We need a major international effort to bring the country closer to the European Union and to NATO and to shore up its institutions and its territorial integrity. The United Kingdom is ready to play its part, and we are proud of our military contribution to EUFOR Operation Althea. The recent protests demonstrate clearly that stability is not yet fully entrenched in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the continued need for the safeguard which EUFOR provides.

Second, I wanted to turn to crisis response.

The European Union has been a steadfast supporter of United Nations efforts responding to a number of humanitarian crises.

On Syria, the European Union has been working closely with the United Nations to provide the urgently needed financial support and humanitarian assistance so necessary today. A greater international effort is required, and we urge others to increase the level of their contributions.

Aid is necessary, and more is needed. But the ability to deliver that aid to those who need it is currently undermined by a regime using blocking and stalling tactics. For this reason, the United Kingdom, with its partners in the Security Council, supports urgent progress on agreeing a resolution on the humanitarian situation. More widely, our position remains clear on other aspects of the transition: Assad has no future in Syria. This is something the European Union has also been very clear on.

On Somalia, the United Kingdom welcomes the partnership between the European Union and the United Nations. We are united in our support for a more stable and prosperous Somalia, through our respective, direct and indirect support to AMISOM, the UN mission in Somalia and bilaterally. We should be proud of our efforts. For the first time in nearly two decades of extremism and poverty, Somalis have hope for a better future.

But our partnership in Somalia extends even further. The African Union’s Mission – AMISOM – has been at the heart of efforts to rid Somalis from the dark shadow of Al Shabaab. The European Union’s and the United Nations’ support to AMISOM has enabled it to make progress which even five years ago seemed unimaginable. The United Kingdom also welcomes the European Union Training Mission in Somalia which has now trained over 3,000 Somali troops and continues to provide high level support to the Somali national forces. This is vital. Because it is only through supporting Somalia’s own security forces that a long term solution to one of Africa’s saddest stories has a happier future.

Third, and lastly, I wanted to look ahead to future action and here I wanted to focus my remarks just on one place, the Central African Republic, following the Secretary-General's remarks.

The imminent deployment of the EU mission will help address the security and humanitarian situation in the Bangui area and, working closely with the United Nations, will help stop further deterioration. The policing component that Baroness Ashton described is a critical component of this as is the strong cooperation between the European Union and the African Union on this issue, as well as many others, that Nigeria and Chad both referred to. The United Kingdom has worked closely with our European partners to ensure that this was possible and I strongly associate us with the remarks that France has made about the need for both creativity and realism for the next phase.

Mr President,

In conclusion, these examples are just a small part of the significant and wide-ranging work the European Union and the United Nations have delivered together in the past year. It shows the effect we can deliver when we act in concert and from the same values-based start point. The United Kingdom will continue to play a full role in both organisations as we seek to tackle threats to international peace and security.

Thank you.

Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-european-union-has-been-a-steadfast-supporter-of-united-nations-efforts