EU, SYRIA: Terzi calls for a “humanitarian truce” – EU, SERBIA: yes to Candidate Country status

2012-02-27

“I urged a humanitarian truce, and for insistence that the UN Security Council pass a decision allowing relief to reach a population victimized by unheard of violence”. This was Minister Giulio Terzi’s statement at the end of the EU Council of Foreign Ministers today in Brussels, which voted to approve a package of sanctions against the Damascus regime and to recognize the Syrian National Council as its legitimate interlocutor. The Red Cross “is not even able to get into Homs”, Terzi said. The moment is extremely critical. “But after the conference in Tunis, the coalition of countries supporting the Arab League’s action plan got a major boost, and therefore”, the minister underscored, “there is a general condition that is moving increasingly in the direction of Assad stepping down, but everything is still up in the air”. “Italy”, Terzi added, “agrees with the European sanctions against Syria because, “there is no other way except a military intervention, which no one wants for the moment”.The new sanctions are aimed at the financial and economic sectors, particularly Syrian central bank transactions and the export of precious metals, such as gold, and diamonds; restrictions have also been placed on cargo flights. Seven ministers considered guilty of having violated international humanitarian laws have been refused entry visas to the EU and had their assets frozen. This is the 12th package of sanctions that the EU foreign ministers have approved against the Damascus regime.The ministers also agreed to grant Serbia Candidate Country status, something that Italy has long supported. Serbia made a significant step in this direction with an agreement signed in Pristina last Friday on the ways in which Kosovo will participate in regional forums. The formal decision now goes to the General Affairs Council of Tuesday next and will be made official at the summit of heads of state and government on Thursday.The ministers also voted to extend the mandate of the EUNAV-Atalanta counter-piracy mission through December 2014. In their announcement of the extension, the ministers hailed the success of a mission that has led to “the prevention and repression of acts of piracy and kidnappings off the coast of Somalia, thereby contributing to the economic security and activities of the region’s countries and of the entire international community”. They also discussed the idea of expanding the mission mandate, which is currently limited to the sea.

Source :
https://www.esteri.it/en/sala_stampa/archivionotizie/approfondimenti/2012/02/20120227_consiglioministroesteri/