# Remarks by HRVP Federica Mogherini at the 'Supporting Syria and the Region' conference

London, 4 February 2016

Thank you, I would like to thank all those humanitarian workers who are making the difference every single day. And I believe if we are here today it is because we feel we share a responsibility and a duty. I would say a duty. A duty to focus today and tomorrow - when the conference will be over - on the people of Syria.

We see the numbers, we talk of geopolitics, but we often forget the names, the faces of the persons whose lives are at stake. And let me say that sometimes, we Europeans, do that. If we focus on them, each and every one of them then, maybe, it will be a bit easier to help a little bit to make the right things, to take the right decisions. And we all have difficult decisions to make, in order to be consistent and honour our responsibilities on both tracks we have in front of us: the humanitarian one - and I will come to that - and the fragile, difficult, very difficult but still existent political process, built with patience and courage in Vienna, in New York, in Geneva, and next week in Munich.

Let me also say very clearly, as I see him sitting here, that mentioning the name of Staffan de Mistura and thanking him is not enough. We need to empower him and create the conditions for his work to succeed. This is our responsibility.

And let me also say very clearly that those who still believe that there can be a military solution to this war should wake up, should simply wake up. The only way to save Syria and to save Syrians is to implement the roadmap set by all of us in the International Support Group and endorse for the first time ever after five years of war the Security Council resolution unanimously adopted in December, implemented in all its parts. A ceasefire in place as talks will re-start; immediate confidence-building measures starting with full access for humanitarian aid to all areas in need – the ones we see like Madaya and all the others that out of the eye of our public opinion. We need to protect the political process, make it inclusive, make it deliver and make sure it is accompanied by substantial steps on the ground; to rebuild trust not only among the parties, but first and foremost among the Syrians.

The EU as the major donor for Syria – the major donor – and as a major political diplomatic player in the region feels this sense of urgency. And let me say, we expect this sense of urgency to be shared by all in the region and international community.

Today the European Union pledges €2.4 billion of EU budget alone for 2016 and 2017. This is more than twice of what we pledged at the last conference in Kuwait, and this is only from the EU budget. On top of that come the national interventions.

But let me say that money alone will not make it. You know it better than me. If you have the money, you have the humanitarian aid, you do not have access and we do not have a political horizon, we will meet here again next year with more money and no solution. We do this anyway. We do this to support Syrians inside Syria. We do this for Syrians hosted in the neighbouring countries: in Jordan, in Lebanon, in Turkey.

The EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan and the Refugee Facility have just been activated. We are working closely with Lebanon and Jordan on what we call the European Union "compacts" which are plans that won't just ease the living conditions of refugees, they will also support the economic and social resilience of Lebanon and Jordan in these difficult times.

Let me mention in particular the fact that we are working with Jordan on an initiative on rules of origin to promote new employment and economic opportunities and encourage additional investment to the benefit of both, Jordanians and the refugees. And let me also announce here that this initiative could be implemented, if the Council agrees, over a 10-year period with a mid-term revision. Let me also stress here, especially here in London, that this is exactly a specific added-value of the European Union compared to single measures that Member States can take.

Jordan and Lebanon are still rocks in the Middle Eastern storm: investing in their resilience and their sustainability, in the sustainability of their policies is also an investment in our own security, in our own future.

The future of Syria, the future of those children, women and men we have seen in the video will not be written somewhere else and it is our responsibility to allow them to live it. It is our collective responsibility to make today a day of hope as the Chancellor [Merkel] mentioned this morning, and to turn hope into reality. To bring peace in Syria and to rebuild the country. The European Union is ready. Thank you.

**For more information:**

Link to the video: http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/video/player.cfm?ref=I115876

EU pledges more than €3 billion for Syrians in 2016 at the London conference

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