

Remarks by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini upon arrival at the Informal meeting of Heads of state or government

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First of all, I am glad that yesterday the Interior Ministers managed to take a decision. It is only one part, and maybe not even the most relevant part of our strategy to deal with the refugee crisis, with the huge migration flows we are facing in the world, not only in Europe. But it is a very relevant and important part of our internal decision-making process, because it gives us the credibility internally to deal with our partners externally.

I hope tonight the heads of state and government will manage to focus on a broader picture, looking ahead, focusing on the concrete steps that Europeans can take to help also the rest of the region and the rest of the world to deal with this phenomenon.

I will update the heads of state and government on the progresses we have done, the work we have done over these past months in external actions: being it our work with Africa, African Union, key African countries of origin and transit in view of the summit in Malta - most recently during my trip to Niger, we have started a very important work with the authorities there -, but also our diplomatic efforts both on the crisis in Libya and on the crisis in Syria, that I hope can also be an issue of discussion tonight with the leaders.

Also obviously, in the immediate terms, our financial support to the refugees in the region itself. I expect tonight some important and substantial decisions to be taken. We have put a lot of European money in it; it would be good to see a matching of this founding also from the Member States, all of them.

Q and A

On the EU being united, when some MS want to open up yesterday's decision of Interior Ministers:

We are always in difficult decision-making processes, but I think that at the end of the

day we all realise that only as Europeans, united, we will manage this phenomenon internally and we will contribute to the solution of the crises we have around us. Only as Europeans, united. I think the European people understand it well; I hope also the European leaders will understand.

On the situation in the Serbia-Croatia borders:

I spoke today with the two Prime Ministers, of Serbia and of Croatia, one on the phone, and the other one in person just before coming here, urging them to continue working - in particular the Croatian Prime Minister - to work on the constructive approach. Closing borders is never a solution, and in that part of our continent might bring back difficult feelings and emotions that we don't need in this moment. While we need to work together as Europeans - Member States and non-Member States - especially in the Western Balkans, to manage the difficult refugee flow and migration phenomenon together in partnership. I hope that the border can be open again, also because the management of the trade flow can be done in any case, also managing on another level the refugee flow. I hope that my talks today with them, and wisdom can bring us all to a common work to manage a common problem that the whole region, the EU, non-EU, is facing together, we need common solutions and common work.

Watch the video:

<http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/video/player.cfm?ref=I109196>

Languages:

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