Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK)

EU and UN partnership vital for rules-based international system

2019-03-11

Thank you Mr President, and thank you High Representative Mogherini for your own excellent briefing today. It is very striking listening to you - just how central the European Union is to every single issue that is on the Council's agenda. So it is very useful to have this level of engagement.

Mr President, today happens to be an important day for the UK's own relationship with the European Union so I wanted to set out at the beginning that notwithstanding the United Kingdom's forthcoming departure from the European Union, it will of course be mutually beneficial for the UK and the European Union to continue to co-operate closely across the three pillars of the United Nation's work.

Today I'd like to touch on some of the issues that you brought up in your presentation. First on Syria; like others, we very much welcome the fact that Brussels will host the third EU-UN Conference on the future of Syria and the region. The United Kingdom, like other colleagues round the table, strongly supports the UN-led political process. And we call on the Syrian regime - and those that have influence over the Syrian regime- to engage in the political process and to implement the obligations that the regime has under UNSCR 2254. We particularly welcome the recent announcement of EU sanctions against regime figures. And the UK will remain at the forefront of responding to the humanitarian crisis in Syria. We have already given £2.8 billion since 2012, and we will remain engaged.

Second on the subject of Iran - that you raised. We also warmly welcome the EU's work and your personal engagement in support of the JCPOA. We completely agree with you that it's a vital instrument in neutralising the threat of a nuclear-armed Iran. And the UK will remain committed to the JCPOA and we will uphold it as long as Iran continues to meet its commitment in full. We nevertheless continue to see Iran's actions in its neighbourhood as harmful and destabilising, in particular in Syria, in Lebanon and in Yemen.

Third, you spoke about the question of reconciliation in the Western Balkans. Again we very much welcome and support the EU's continued efforts in bringing lasting stability to the region, not least through the EU-facilitated Dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo. The UK was the first State to recognise Kosovo and its independence in 2008, and we will continue to work in full support for the recognition of Kosovo, which will itself enable political

normalisation and deliver increased prosperity for citizens across the region. I should add, however, that we do have concerns that a Dialogue agreement based solely on border changes could risk endangering stability in Kosovo, Serbia and in the region.

And finally turning to Africa, we welcome both the developing dialogue between the European Union and the African Union, and the EU's growing co-operation with the UN in states and regions affected by conflict. The EU's Common Security and Defence Policy Missions, for example in the Sahel, in Somalia and the Central African Republic, have all delivered niche capabilities and nurtured valued partnerships, whilst enabling the UN to direct its resources towards action - where it can add value. As UN Mission mandates come up for renewal – including a number this month on Somalia, DRC and South Sudan– it will be important to strengthen the complementarity between the UN and EU instruments as we move forward.

Mr President, in the coming period, the UK will continue to work in this Council, and with the European Union and other partners, in support of the wider rules-based international system - whether this is in promoting accountability in Myanmar, or whether it's enforcing sanctions against DPRK, or whether it's in defending Ukraine's territorial integrity. A close future partnership between the European and the United Nations will be vital if we are to achieve these important aims.

And Mr President, if I might finish with one question. Particularly given that it is Commission on the Status of Women week here at the UN. I think it would be very interesting to hear your thoughts, High Representative, on how the UN and the EU could cooperate more in the field of Women, Peace and Security – particularly when it comes to our peace operations and our involvement in political processes. Thank you.

Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/eu-and-un-partnership-vital-for-rules-based-international-system