SYRIA: Italy stepping up its diplomatic initiatives – Focus on regional dimension and role of Arab League

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Italy is stepping up its diplomatic initiatives to help find a solution to the Syrian crisis under conditions that takes into account, in order of priority, the regional dimension and the role of the Arab League. Conditions that meet with full agreement from our European partners and the countries of the region, as shown by Minister Giulio Terzi's numerous conversations with them.

The Syrian crisis is one of the issues on the agenda for talks between Prime Minister Mario Monti and the American President, Barack Obama, at their meeting in the White House. Minister Terzi, who will be accompanying the Premier on his visit to Washington, will also discuss the crisis with the US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton.

Minister Terzi's most recent telephone conversation was with his Turkish counterpart, Ahmet Davutoglu.Turkey is preparing to organise an international meeting and, if that gives promising results, an international conference on Syria. Davutoglu, who confirmed this initiative, told Terzi that his country is "determined to set up a broad-based forum for an international agreement with concerned countries".

During his round of phone calls with the Arab League General Secretary, Nabil El Araby, and with his German and French colleagues Guido Westerwelle and Alain Juppe', Minister Terzi agreed with the initiative, to be pursued by involving regional actors, of supporting the Syrian opposition. He agreed too on the need to step up the pressure on the regime in Damascus and to set out the international community's initiatives along four lines of intervention.

In addition to supporting the Syrian opposition, the consensus was that the Arab League's leading role deserves increasing support from Europe and should be maintained. Minister Terzi's interlocutors also agreed that the European Union should step up its sanctions against Syria.

Lastly, there was consensus on the need to pursue further initiatives at the United Nations in New York. Minister Terzi agreed with Secretary General El Araby, and with the French and German Foreign Ministers, to keep in constant contact on developments in the Syrian crisis. They fully agreed too on the need for close and constant liaison by all the countries interested in reaching a positive solution to the Syrian crisis.

Italy, together with five other European countries (Belgium, United Kingdom, France, Holland and Spain) has recalled its ambassador from Damascus “for consultations”.

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