Remarks by HRVP Federica Mogherini at the press conference with Lubomír ZAORÁLEK, Czech Minister for Foreign Affairs

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Thank you very much Lubomir.

Well, first of all it is really a pleasure for me to have my first visit within the European Union of 2016 here in Prague and to find you in good health.

It was obviously for me only natural to postpone the visit after your accident and it is reassuring for not only me, but also for our European colleagues, to know that you fully recovered and we are all looking forward to go back to our common work in Brussels also with you joining us back again.

And my thanks also go to you for the extremely constructive, balanced, responsible position that the Czech Republic has always kept over this last year and it is continuing to show in this beginning of the new year on all the issues of our common work.

I think that the position you expressed in the Foreign Affairs Council as well as the Prime Minister in the European Council and other colleagues is always one that identifies the unity of the European Union as the key to solve the major problems we are facing today. We are facing one of the most difficult times both outside of the European Union and inside and I think that the Czech Republic is smartly investing in its strategic choice to be part of a Union that gives us instruments to face this crisis better than each of the 28 alone.

Obviously with the differences that are there, that can be there, with the different sensitivities and positions still investing in a sustainable way of working united. I think this is the smart way forward that you are indicating also to the other Member States in a very strong way.

I would also like to thank you very much for the way in which you are chairing the Visegrad 4 which is always a good contribution to our common discussions, and a particularly important one as we face challenges internally, externally, still to the south, in the region, to the South East, in the Western Balkans in particular with a big flow of refugees that is crossing this

region but also still to the East. This is a particularly important region for the European Union to listen to, to work with and to find the right answers to our problems.

Let me thank you for the investment that the Czech diplomacy has done also in the European diplomacy with the good candidature of Edita HRDA that is going to start as Managing Director for Americas soon. I am looking forward to work with her.

As we were saying just before coming here, it is somehow an investment in another level of national diplomacy. There is the national diplomacy and then, there is the European diplomacy that tries to support, complement and coordinate the diplomacies and the common work we do at 28 around the world.

When we are united, we are much stronger together in the world. We have proved this in some cases over the last year when it comes to the climate change deal we managed to have also thanks to our unity as Europeans, the difficult but historical deal with Iran we have achieved because we were altogether, the difficult but crucial Syria talks we have finally started. I would like to thank the Czech Republic for the essential contributions to our Syria policy, the work we do together on the Middle East and all the difficult issues we have together.

I know, we know, that we can always count, again as I said, on a constructive, responsible, balanced and engaged Czech Republic's position and contribution to our European work and I am sure this helps a lot to shape a European work that is helpful and useful for all the citizens starting from or including the Czech citizens who we will have the chance to discuss with and listen to later today in our citizens' dialogue. And I thank you very much.

Q&A

Q. About implementation day of the JCPOA

There is not a set date yet. The date is going to be linked to the full implementation of all the steps that need to be taken for the implementation day to happen. What I can tell you is that my expectations are that this day could come rather soon and that the implementation of the agreement is proceeding well, it's encouraging. I had a phone conversation about that with Foreign Minister of Iran Zarif just a few days ago and with Secretary Kerry yesterday evening. Things are going well so I expect implementation day to be soon but there is not a fixed date yet also because we have to have the IAEA to finish and complete its work in this respect. We want implementation day to come with things properly done, to be fully sure that everything is as it should.

Link to the video: http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/video/player.cfm?ref=I114847

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