Joint press conference of the HR/VP Federica Mogherini with Børge Brende, Foreign Affairs Minister of Norway, and Javad Zarif, Foreign Affairs Minister of Iran

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Q. On Trump's speech following the Orlando attacks

A. I do not comment speeches or positions expressed in other countries, or electoral campaigns. What I can tell you in that in Europe, we are very much aware of the risks that our own societies, our own citizens in some cases, put to the security of our citizens. We have learnt, over the past months and years, to separate the issues and the challenges put to our institutions and societies by the management of a huge refugee and migratory flows, with the primary purpose of protecting people's lives and saving lives at sea, and the threats put to their fellow citizens in Europe by some European citizens. So, the fight against any form of terrorism inside Europe is taken extremely serious as is taken extremely serious our duty to properly manage the challenge of migratory and refugee flows. But we keep these two issues completely separated.

Q. On the role of Iran in Syria

A. In my view, the role that Iran can play, especially on Syria and Iraq can be essential. We sit together in the International Support Group for Syria; what we expect from Iran is that it follows up on all the commitments that we took together as we do expect the same from all the other members of the International Support Group for Syria. This means first of all guaranteeing or facilitating the work for allowing humanitarian access to all besieged areas. We, Europeans, do not make distinctions. To us, the basic principles of humanitarian aid is that it has to reach all people in needs, no matter of what kind of political or military dynamic they are trapped in. And we are the ones that, together with the United Nations, are trying to bring those humanitarian trucks on the ground inside besieged areas or difficult to reach areas. We invite Iran to facilitate this access everywhere Iran can have an influence. In this respect, obviously, the same goes with others who have influence on others parts also, ie to facilitate the full respect of the cessation of hostilities we agreed upon and to exercise their influence for the political negotiations to start significantly in Geneva. This is what, not only we expect, but also what we work on together with Iran and with others in the Support Group.

We really believe that it is high time to put an end to this war first of all for the sake of Syrian people.

Q. On implementation of JCPOA and on sanctions

A. All nuclear related sanctions were lifted on Iran as of 16 January, ie on implementation day, and in particular all the EU nuclear related sanctions were fully lifted. We are very actively engaging with the business community and with the banks in Europe and elsewhere, outside of Europe, to encourage them engaging in Iran. I was myself heading an unprecedented delegation of seven Commissioners - plus me - to Teheran a few months ago to open channels of cooperation between Iran and the European Union on different fields; from transport to energy to science and technology and economy and business. I can share with you one data which is that, in the first four months of this year, trade between Iran and the European Union increased by 22%, only in four months compared to last year. So, we know very well that there are challenges and we are addressing these in trying to explain to our banking systems as much as we can, in the clearer possible terms, all the things that are today possible for them to do, and that were not possible before so that they gain confidence and that their companies renewed engagement and relations. It will take probably a little bit of time but already now, we are seeing developments in the right direction. And I can express here, with the strongest possible tone the fact that Europe is committed to make sure that the Iranian citizens can benefit from the lifting of the sanctions that the Iranian deal has provoked.

Q. On the referendum in UK – how a possible departure of the UK could affect the diplomatic power of the EU

A. I would not speculate on a "if" but I would let, as it is natural and normal, the UK citizens to take their decisions before any kind of speculation in the future. But what I can say today is that the UK is contributing to a great extent to the European Union's foreign and security policy. All the features of our common foreign and security policy are highly determined also by the UK's contribution for us.

Link to the video: http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/video/player.cfm?ref=I122781

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