

Remarks by High Representative/ Vice- President Federica Mogherini at the press conference following the Foreign Affairs Council

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Merci beaucoup et excusez-moi pour le retard. La journée a été un peu particulière comme vous l'imaginez bien.

Nous avons commencé nos travaux avec une discussion sur les attaques terroristes à Paris, mais aussi à Beyrouth, en Egypte, en Turquie, en Irak, dans la région.

Nous avons tout d'abord écouté l'intervention de notre collègue français et nous avons souligné l'importance de travailler avec urgence et unité à résoudre les principales crises qui sont à la base des menaces auxquelles nous faisons face.

Notamment la Syrie, je vais revenir sur cela dans une minute. Mais ce n'est pas quelque chose de nouveau. Déjà en février, après les attaques à Charlie Hebdo nous avons décidé ensemble, et nous l'avons fait, de renforcer la coopération contre le terrorisme avec les pays clés de la région, notamment les pays du Moyen Orient, du Maghreb, du Sahel, la Turquie.

Nous avons également déployé 8 experts contre-terrorisme dans les pays clés de la région. Nous avons travaillé durant ces mois pour soutenir les capacités de sécurité de pays clés, comme la Tunisie d'un côté et l'Irak de l'autre part.

Et, nous avons bien sûr renforcé le rôle, le travail, de nos missions au Sahel. Et ce, parce que même lorsqu'on regarde au Moyen Orient il faut garder à l'esprit le fait qu'il y a des menaces terroristes aussi dans l'Afrique sub-saharienne.

Nous avons ainsi renforcé nos missions au Sahel, dans leur rôle de conseil en matière de sécurité du pays concerné.

Ce sont, bien sûr, des activités qui représentent un investissement pour le futur de la sécurité de la région, des régions concernées. Elles porteront également leurs fruits en Europe avec le temps, car elles sont complémentaires au travail indispensable et urgent de nos collègues, Ministres de l'Intérieurs et, sur le volet extérieur, ceux de la Défense, avec l'aspect militaire de la gestion de la crise, dont on parle.

Je vais avoir demain le Conseil des Ministres de la Défense, comme vous le savez. Nous commencerons par discuter ces points avec le Ministre français de la Défense Jean-Yves Le Drian comme premier point de la journée de demain.

As we see from discussions in Antalya in these hours, fighting terrorism is a common issue, global, as the G20 recalls and as we have discussed today with the Ministers. A global threat, not only European, not only in the Mediterranean region, but a global threat and a global responsibility to prevent it and to fight it in the only way that we see can be effective and also sticking to our values, which is coming together. Coming together in our differences is our strength - as Europeans and with our neighbours and we are going to keep this. I have shared with the Ministers one fear that I have: it is that European societies might think that it is diversity that weakens us or threatens us. Well, actually it is the fear of diversity that can destroy our societies from within. And this is another threat we are facing, together with the very concrete one that we have seen in the streets of Paris last Friday night. So, it is a cultural, a political response that we also need. The one of keeping the nature of open societies that make Europe what it is.

Coming together is also what we did finally on Syria in these last weeks. We had today most of our time dedicated on working on a political solution to the Syria conflict. This would be also the best possible way providing the conditions to defeat Da'esh. Putting an end to the war in Syria would create the conditions to defeat Da'esh on the ground, starting from Syria and obviously also in Iraq and elsewhere. So we have worked in the last couple of months to have a format and the process started. Just two months ago - we were remembering today with Staffan de Mistura who joins us today for the discussions and all the ministers - we were all in New York in the margins of the General Assembly. We were meeting with Staffan de Mistura and listing all the difficulties that we were seeing in front of ourselves in working towards the beginning of a process, of a format that could have brought together all the relevant regional and international actors. Two months ago, that was the European agenda, the UN agenda, but it seemed very far away. Today, two months afterwards, we have had two meetings in Vienna with the format that we had foreseen as an objective for us and that is now in place - not by chance, I will not say it's thanks only to the European Union, it's thanks to the efforts of many in the International Community. But let me say that it is also thanks to our common and coordinated work that we have managed to bring together countries from Iran to Saudi Arabia, from Turkey to Egypt, from the US and Russia, leading a process that can give us some space to do three things at the same time: starting the political process for a transition in Syria; in parallel working on a national-wide ceasefire, except obviously from the fight against terrorist organisations namely Da'esh and Al-Nusra; and thirdly, working on the humanitarian assistance on the ground to improve the living conditions of the Syrian people in Syria and allow them to live in decent ways. Humanitarian work can also help the political process to take shape.

The EU is playing this role, not only in the start of this process, not only in bringing the actors around the table, but also we are ready to play our role in the process that is starting. We discussed today our contribution on the work that we will do together with the others around the table in Vienna, and I will guarantee that all Member States feed in this process equally and in a coordinated way so those that are sitting around the table themselves, but also those that are sitting around the table through me representing them

all. We are ready to contribute on different levels, as I said on the humanitarian one there are specific projects that the European Union is suggesting and is ready to work on, if you want I can go more in details on that.

Second on the work on the opposition in Syria. We need not only to unite but also make sure that their contribution to the process happens from the beginning and in a constructive and coordinated way. And also on the work on counter-terrorism. This is a work that needs to be done in details to get to a common understanding among all the different regional and mainly international actors of who is a terrorist organisation and who is not. We have a very solid basis, which is the UN Security Council decisions on this and for sure Da'esh and Al-Nusra are clearly listed in that. So, whatever ceasefire will or can be built in the coming months, obviously it will not concern actions against these two organisations in their different forms.

As you know from Vienna on Saturday, we decided quite an ambitious timetable. We believe that this can be respected and that there is a sense of urgency coming from Europe that could not be ignored by any of the actors, being them regional or international, around the table. Europe is one of the areas which is the most affected by the terrorist threat, by the crisis of refugees fleeing the country and it's one of the actors that is investing more money in the humanitarian aspect of dealing with the crisis.

We have a cooperative approach. We believe that the only way to solve this crisis is through bringing together different actors. This needs to bring results, sooner rather than later. It has to be a matter of months and not years. I believe all the actors around the table now acknowledge the need to change attitude to this crisis. It is not just one crisis, but it is the most serious war that we are facing in our times.

We also discussed with the Ministers migration. Let me stress, so that there is no confusion on the political side, on the institutional side - and I know that President Hollande is saying exactly the same things in these very same moments in the Congress - that there must be no mix, no confusion between the issue of migration and refugees and the terrorist threats. We have to keep that very clear in mind. Any mix, any confusion, any amalgam, as someone coming in this morning said, would be extremely dangerous, extremely counterproductive for our own public opinions and for our own continent. We have a duty to protect those in need of protection that are escaping from the very same threats that we are facing in Europe today. We have to be very clear on that.

On migration, we discussed the follow-up of the decisions we have already taken, both on the central Mediterranean routes, a few days after the Malta Summit, and on the Eastern route, the Western Balkan one. We have focussed the Foreign Ministers work on the external actions that need to implement the two agendas we have, which are good ones. If you want, I can go more in details on this following your questions. But mainly we have focused on cooperation on different aspects of common policies we have with our partners in Africa and Northern Africa. I will travel to Chad this week to start a first work on implementation with our friends of the G5 Sahel but also obviously to work on security aspects with them.

On the Western Balkans and Eastern routes, obviously, we have discussed our cooperation with Turkey, but also with Lebanon and Jordan, which are three dimensions of our work in the Middle East that are essential to us. And, let me stress that our cooperation with Turkey, in particular, but also with the other two, should not be based purely on the issue of refugees and managing the refugee flows and borders. This is obviously a key element of our cooperation, but has different dimensions, multiple dimensions to which we have to give broader political framework. This is something I have discussed with the Turkish Foreign Minister on Saturday in Vienna and we are working on this. So, not only, a summit, but also a High level ministerial dialogue that we will have hopefully in the coming weeks. Because again, our relation with Turkey does not limit itself to the issues of borders and refugees.

Last but not least, we had an update on our work on the Middle East Peace Process, on our engagement with our Israeli and Palestinian friends and in the Quartet. I updated the Ministers on the steps forward. I also updated them on the guidelines that were adopted on the indication of origin last week. We have decided to come back to this issue in December, once the Quartet Envoys will have paid visit to the institutions in Israel and Palestine, hopefully before mid-December.

We had foreseen a point on the agenda on Eastern partnership. For me it was especially relevant to update the Ministers on two visits I have done last week in Kiev and in Tbilisi. We will have just in a few hours the Association Council with Georgia as well and we have a difficult situation in Moldova. Unfortunately, today the situation was clearly quite exceptional. Our timetable was a little bit reviewed. So, this will be the first point of our discussion in December for all the Ministers to be able to be there, discussing our Eastern partners and relations with them.

Thank you.

Watch the video:

<http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/video/player.cfm?ref=I112123>