

Remarks by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini upon arrival at the Foreign Affairs Council

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Check against delivery

We discussed with French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius Friday in Vienna to check if there was a need to change the agenda of our meeting today. We actually realised that the agenda was already very much centered on the issues that we need to tackle to respond to the attacks in Paris, as well as to the attacks that took place the day before in Beirut, the attacks on Russian civilians on the plane in Egypt, but also in Turkey, in Iraq, and in Syria every day. Our whole agenda, our daily work of all the ministers of all the European institutions is already centered on fighting Da'esh with all the possible means and its ramifications, not only in Syria, not only in Iraq, but everywhere it is spreading; and also forms of terrorism in other parts of the world like Africa. This is also something we discussed in Malta at the summit last week with the African leaders.

Our agenda with partner countries in the Arab world or Africa is not only focused on migration, it is also on security, counter terrorism and our values, our common values that are European ones, but also are universal ones: the ones of democracy, of freedom, of the right to live life in peace and respect.

Today, we will work first of all on Syria. I will report to the ministers the work we have undertaken in these weeks. Last Saturday in Vienna, with the establishment of a contact group led by the United Nations Special Envoy, Staffan de Mistura. He will be with us today to work together on the follow up of the decisions taken on Saturday in Vienna. As you know the European Union has worked over these months since the summer to establish this contact group, insisting very much that all the relevant actors, regional and international actors, join their forces together to guarantee the fight against Da'esh and the defeat of Da'esh in Syria and at the same time ceasefire and a political transition for the country. Obviously ceasefire doesn't apply to the fight against Da'esh and terrorist groups there. We will exchange views with Staffan de Mistura on the way ahead. The European Union is ready to support and to do its part on all the relevant points that were agreed in Vienna, in particular the work we can do with the opposition groups to bring them at the table and also to start the political transition in Syria. This is something we will discuss with the ministers and will come back to you in the afternoon.

We will also have three other points on the agenda. One is obviously the migration one. We will come back to the follow up of the Malta Summit with the African partners. There are specific things that we are now called to do, not only money-wise, but also in terms of cooperation with our partners. On the Eastern route of migration, there is an important work we are doing with Turkey in particular, but also with the Balkan countries and the

countries of the Middle East, in particular Jordan and Lebanon, to support them. Not only – again- on the migration side but also on security and counter-terrorism, and we will discuss that.

We have also a discussion on the Middle East Peace Process. I will update the Ministers on my latest talks with President Abbas and Prime Minister Netanyahu.

And finally a short point - but consistent, relevant - on our Eastern partners. I just came back last week from Georgia and Ukraine, so we will have an update on that.

Questions and answers

Q: On support to Egypt after the Russian plane crash in Egypt

Da'esh is a threat to all of us. Let me say that coming together today, as we were coming together on Friday, joining forces and acknowledging that this is not an attack on one single country. It is not only an attack on Europe, it is an attack on civilization - I would say – which requires us to unite forces, share information, share a political agenda, put together all of our diplomatic, economic - sometimes also military efforts – to face this threat. There is a security component to this. There is mainly a diplomatic and a political component of the work we are doing. I believe this is going to be the field where we are going to defeat Da'esh for real, managing for instance to start a political transition in Syria, different kind of governance, able to unite the country- that would provide the best possible way, platform, to defeat Da'esh, not only to fight it. But we are not there yet, we are starting the process and this is the key. So, the important thing, the important message that comes – I think – in these days from Europe for sure, but also from the rest of our partners in the region, especially around the Mediterranean is: We come together. They want to divide us, we are even more united.

Q: On Syria, acting after the Paris attacks?

It has been months that we have tried to give a push to a new diplomatical effort in Syria. Since the summer - not by chance, because in July we signed a very important agreement with Iran that we believe can open the way for a possibility of a different regional engagement. So, immediately after that, we insisted with our partners, with the UN to restart with a different push a diplomatic process to solve the crisis in Syria. After 4 years and a half, I think it is high time. I am sad to say, we were right because this is the way in which we can really guarantee the security of our citizens. Obviously, there is the immediate tasks: these are more for interior ministers, intelligence sharing, security, internal borders, and external borders. These are all fields that need immediate responses and Europeans are coming together also on that side. You know that there is going to be an extraordinary interior ministers meeting on Friday. This is the immediate and this is for the interior work we have to do. But the real guarantee of our security is prevention and defeat of terrorist groups everywhere in the region. Again, I mentioned the Middle East, I mentioned Sub-Saharan Africa. I will go to Chad as the G5 Sahel Ministers will be meeting here. The Interior Ministers will be meeting there and I will be meeting with them to discuss with them about the risks of Boko Haram and other terrorist groups that

are affecting the security there. But again, we live in a world where security there also means security here and vice versa. So, our jobs as Foreign Ministers, my job as High Representative, is to work with our partners around the world, to make sure that the conditions for security of our citizens and other citizens are built. It is not something that one builds immediately but for sure what happened in Paris and again what happened also in the other countries of the region give us, and I think, give all the International Community a new sense of urgency. We need to find a way of effectively put an end to the war in Syria and not only fight but also defeat Da'esh once for all.

Link to the Video:

<https://ec.europa.eu/avservices/video/player.cfm?ref=I112184>.