

Remarks by High Representative/ Vice- President Federica Mogherini at the joint press conference with Nabil Elaraby, Secretary General of the League of Arab States

eeas.europa.eu/delegations/syria/5934/remarks-high-representative-vice-president-federica-mogherini-joint-press-conference-nabil_en

Check against delivery

Thank you very much.

This is my first time here in the headquarters of the League of Arab States, and I am very proud of the relationship, the partnership, the cooperation we have established between the European Union and the League of Arab States, notably on the many crises that we have around our region. We share a region that is indeed one of the most complicated and most conflictual ones. This requires from our side a common effort to prevent further crisis, to manage those that are currently ongoing and to find common solutions to put an end to the wars and the conflicts we are facing around us, from Libya, to Syria to the lack of Middle East Peace Process that is commonly concerning us very, very much. On all these three things and furthermore than that, we are working very much together. But we also have the opportunities of our common region that are on our common agenda.

Sharing a region means also sharing a space, a geographical space, a historical space. We feel this common responsibility on our shoulders to make sure that our peoples benefit from our cooperation in a very direct way. We are somehow complementary to each other and we are friends. That is why I am again a little bit shocked even myself by realising that this is the first time I visit you here. So often we meet either in Brussels or New York or everywhere, but for sure it is not going to be my last visit here. Regardless of this, the level of our cooperation, the level of our partnership is – I think - extremely high, extremely important, and I would like to thank you for this, for the leadership you are showing in leading this organisation that is crucial for not only Europe, but also, I would say, the entire world. I thank you very much.

On Syria, we have been working together with, first of all the United Nations and the UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura, to strengthen the UN framework to facilitate talks to start a political process. We are particularly satisfied by the fact that for the first time, last week in Vienna all the regional players that have a direct influence inside Syria and on the parties involved in the war were present at the talks. We see this as a first step for starting a political process. We have obviously an open channel with all of the regional and international players in this respect, including the Arab League, whose work we value a lot in this respect and we will continue to work in this framework.

I was in contact with [UN Special Envoy]Staffan de Mistura even this morning to facilitate and to support his work with all the relevant actors involved; actively involved because there are different ways of supporting UN processes. We need now to have the

international and the regional players actively supporting this process. I believe it is possible to start a political process inside Syria, a Syrian-led one, guaranteeing the integrity and territorial unity of the country. A secular transition that could allow all the relevant parties in Syria to be represented in the future government of the country. I believe, we believe in Europe, that this is going to be the only possible way to unite the country against the threat of Da'esh and other terrorist groups as defined by the UN Security Council Presidential Statements recently.

We are working constantly with Bernardino León, UN Special Envoy and all the neighbouring countries of Libya, the rest of the regional and international community to support the beginning of a national unity government in Libya. This is always one of the first points of my agenda in my bilateral contacts in the region and in the Arab world very much so. I think that finally we have the region and the international community united in asking the different Libyan actors to endorse the agreement that is now on the table. These are crucial hours and I believe that the entire region and the entire international community is, in this moment, asking the same thing to the Libyan people, to the Libyan decision makers which is very similar to what the Libyan people are asking them, which is to unite forces inside Libya to give to the country the future and the present that it deserves. Libya is a rich country, a country full of natural resources, of human resources, with complicated history. The international community and the regional community is ready to support institution building, security, all different source of services delivery to the population especially with the mayors of the municipalities. The European Union has prepared a package for already some months, a very consistent one of 100 million euros that are ready from day 1, even from day 0, after the formation of National Unity Government. This support will obviously need to be discussed and decided under the Libyan authorities' leadership because it is very clear that the ownership, the leadership has to be in Libyan hands. The international community and the European Union in particular is ready and willing to support but a leading role has to be a Libyan one.

That's why I can speak on behalf of all my European friends and colleagues when I say: we really hope and we really invite the Libyan relevant decision makers in these hours to take responsibility and respond to the need of their people and the call to the international regional community to take responsibility and unite forces before it is Da'esh taking more ground in the country and to give the Libyan people the right to live in peace and to live in a country that can be rebuilt. We are ready to support them.

Link to the video:

<http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/video/player.cfm?ref=I111386>