European External Action Service (EEAS)

Remarks by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini at the press conference at the United Nations Security Council in New York

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Thank you very much. It is a pleasure to be back in the occasion of the NPT review conference. My presence here was already planned today for addressing the conference, but I also took the chance of following up on the European Council we had last Thursday where the Heads of State and Government of the European Union discussed the tragedies that are happening in the Mediterranean, linked to the trafficking and smuggling of people across the Mediterranean, but also all the way through Africa and, in most cases, from places of the world like Syria or the Horn of Africa where their life is put at risk. So, I have had discussions about that today with the EU Permanent representatives of the countries that are sitting in the Security Council: Lithuania that is taking the Presidency of the Security Council from Friday, Spain, UK and France. I will meet also the Italian Permanent representative later on, the Russian Permanent representative and I will meet Samantha Power tomorrow in Washington as well as Secretary Kerry - not only on this but also on this. I will be visiting China next week where this issue will also be part of my talks.

This is also an opportunity for me to meet Iran Foreign Minister Zarif who is in town tonight on the nuclear talks, after the solutions we found in Switzerland less than one month ago on continuing our talks to find an agreement. And I am confident that we can proceed with a good work. As you know, the work on drafting the text of the agreement has restarted after many months on the basis of the solutions we found in Switzerland all together.

I will also have a bilateral meeting with Pavlo Klimkin, the Foreign Minister of Ukraine, after the positive summit that was held between the European Union and Ukraine yesterday in Kyiv. And I hope I don't forget any point of my programme, which is a very dense and rich one, and for the moment a very fruitful one.

Q&A:

Question: In your meeting with Foreign Minister Zarif, do you think you will be able to smooth over some of the disagreements on the timing of lifting sanctions, and some of the other areas that have proven to be sticking points? And might the issue of the seizure of the ship today by Iranian forces come up? And on the question of an EU mandate for military

operations off of Libya, do you have any sense of when that could be pushed through at the Security Council?

HRVP Federica Mogherini: In my meeting with Minister Zarif tonight, for sure the issue mentioned is something I will raise. I will also discuss that with Secretary Kerry tomorrow obviously to get more information on the dynamics. And we will for sure go through all the points that we still have to finalise in view of a final agreement by the end of June. I expect that we can have a fruitful conversation about this after our teams have already restarted the work in these days and are going to have a drafting session later this week.

On the creation of an international framework, of a legal framework for fighting traffickers and smugglers, we also had a very useful conversation with Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon together with Prime Minister Renzi yesterday in Sicily. It is not for the European Union to set the UN Security Council time framework, the EU is not sitting in the Security Council, as you know very well. So it is not for me to comment on the next steps. What I can say is that we are working in Brussels and in strong coordination with the European Union members of the Security Council to make sure that our planning, our options that are being prepared in Brussels, go hand in hand with the discussions that can be made in the Security Council, and not only with the European Union members, also with others. I think I mentioned the fact that I just met the Jordanian permanent representative, not only as President of the Council but also as an Arab country that has a lot to say when it comes to the stability and the security of the region. And also the African Union. I spoke with the President of the African Union Mrs Zuma this morning to find ways of cooperating strongly in preventing the criminal organisations to act on the African territory and to address the root causes of the phenomena. Because we know very well that we cannot focus only on one of the links of the chain, meaning the last part of the trip. But we have to address root causes; we have to address the issue of poverty, of wars, of human rights, of unequal distribution and access to resources, being it financial or other kind of resources. And we need to do it in partnership with the countries that are involved in this. Because the human trafficking and smuggling is clearly a violation of Human rights but it is also clearly a threat and a challenge for the security and the stability of all countries involved, all the way. It is not only a European issue, it is not only a Libyan issue - even if we are looking at finding ways of cooperating with all Libyans to face this threat and to find ways of working together in preventing this spreading even more in the territory. But we need to work in cooperation with our partners around the region and around the world for sure. So not for me to set up a time frame for UN Security Council to work, but for sure to make sure that the European Union work on this is coordinated and is fully in respect of international law. On this, let me also say that I spoke with António Guterres on Sunday to start coordinating even more closely, because our main objective is to save lives. Saving lives also means take care of the people we save. And on this we look for a strong partnership with the UNHCR and it would be good to see the UNHCR operating in all places through which the smuggling and trafficking of people takes place.

Question: On this migrants' smuggling question. Can you say how soon your enforcement operations will begin? Which countries will participate? And any details on how this enforcement effort will be underway?

HRVP Federica Mogherini: I was tasked last Thursday to start preparation for possible operations by the European Union, in full respect of international law, which means that we will need in any case to have a legal basis before we start operation on a European Union level. In the meantime, we are preparing options for a mission, for an operation. The process would be, first for me to present options to the Ministers, for them to take decisions; decisions in the EU are taken by unanimity, 28. And then it will be up to single Member States to decide whether and in which way they can participate to the operation. So we have different phases: preparation has already started on Thursday, on the very same day [than the European Council]. We are having the first discussion and thinking with the Member States in these very same hours. And we are working rapidly, but still, "rapidly" in the context of the European Union, definitely means not a couple of days. Also because in the meantime, as I said, we need to make sure that we have framework of international legality, in which we want to operate. There is nothing we are going to do that is outside of the framework and we work together with the UN and/or in partnership with the Libyan authorities. I will have a meeting shortly also with Bernardino Leon to see ways in which we can even more support his efforts to find an agreement in Libya because we know we have to partner with Libya, with all Libyans in this. And let me stress it very much because I know that the messages might have been perceived in a nuanced way. I want to make it very clear that there is nothing the European Union is preparing or thinking of that is intended to be against the Libyan people or the Libyan authorities in all their complexity. What we want to do is to work with Libyans on their own security, on their own possibility of freeing the country of criminal and also terrorist networks that are proliferating at this time. So it is a partnership we are looking for.

Question: Would you please tell us whether the EU supports a resolution from the Security Council and the creation of a maritime force that deals with the issue of trafficking people across the Mediterranean and with the flow of arms inside and outside Libya?

HRVP Federica Mogherini: The content of my talks here today has been on the first part of your question, absolutely yes. How we can stop the trafficking organisations: at sea, not only at sea, let me say, because if you take 5 minutes and look at the statement of the European Council there is this task for me, but there is also the task of working on other aspects of the prevention and the fight against trafficking organisations. Namely, the work will increase with Niger, with Mali, with the other neighbouring countries of Libya – Tunisia, Egypt, Algeria. Not to focus only on the last part of the trip but also on the rest of the security we need to build. So yes, this is definitely part of my mandate, this is definitely part of my talks that for the moment have been very constructive, I would say.

Question: Is Syria also part of your discussions? The United Nations has invited Iran to be part of a possible Geneva 3. When you meet the Foreign Minister of Iran, will you talk about

Syria and Yemen with him as well?

HRVP Federica Mogherini: The main issue for our discussion tonight will be, as always, the nuclear talks. We have a lot on the agenda there. But every time that we meet, I also take the chance of discussing with Foreign Minister Zarif the regional situation, the many regional crises that we have open and also the possible role that Iran can play in a constructive way to find a political solution to the crisis, especially in Syria. Let me say that I fully support the efforts of [UN Special envoy] Staffan de Mistura who was here, yesterday, in the Security Council. The European Union is fully supporting his work, politically and also concretely, and I hope that we can find an end to a conflict that we are getting used to, but that is dramatic in terms of humanitarian consequences and regional consequences in the area. And obviously yes, we will discuss also Yemen.

Question: Do you think Iran is ready to discuss a political role, solution, in Syria?

HRVP Federica Mogherini: To discuss, for sure. We had a discussion already. The point is finding ways in which Iran can contribute towards a political solution of the crisis in Syria and finding a way of having a truly Syrian led transition in the country.

Question: What are you asking of Iran to do in Syria? What are you exactly asking them to contribute and how are you reassuring the Arab countries, who really think that Iran is part of the Syrian problem and therefore shouldn't be part of the solution? President Obama is calling leaders to Camp David, I see the Europeans doing nothing, not even about the refugees from Syria, because the burden is being born by Lebanon and Jordan. So please can you tell us what the European Union is doing on all that: Iran's role, the refugees and assuring the Arabs.

On the refugees, I just discussed this with the Permanent Representative of Jordan. I was visiting the camps in Jordan myself, and those in Lebanon. I know very well the huge number of refugees that Jordan and Lebanon in particular, but also Turkey, are hosting. Let me say the European Union Member States are participating in the resettlement of the refugees who are currently in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. In my personal opinion, we could and should do more and this is going to be one of the issues we will further discuss with the Heads of State and Government. In this respect, you know very well, it is not for the European Union, but for the European Member States to take more responsibility and I am always encouraging them - and actually I am always making the point that, when we discuss about the Europeans' efforts and challenges in welcoming a huge number of migrants and asylum seekers on our territory, we have also to look at the numbers of Arab countries that are hosting and welcoming enormous amounts of refugees themselves.

On Iran, our main contribution is in facilitating the nuclear talks. This is the main task I have, even personally. This has its background in a UN Security Council resolution that indicated the High Representative of the European Union as the facilitator of the talks; so I see it as my main task to make sure that the negotiations proceed in a speedy and a good way. Good way

means that Iran cannot develop a nuclear weapon and can have its right to develop a peaceful programme, as everybody else, which I believe would be a very important contribution to the security of the region, and the stability of the region. Then, I am also convinced that this could lead the way, open the way, to a different role of Iran in the region. I understand very well the concerns of many Arab countries, and not only Arab countries, on the role of Iran, but I am also convinced that it would be naive to imagine that a country like Iran could simply disappear from the map. And the best possible approach you can have is for sure on one side, to have a positive outcome of the nuclear talks so that we can make sure that they cannot develop a nuclear weapon, and on the other side, call for Iran to play a major, a major but positive role in the region. On Syria in particular to encourage the regime to participate to what I called a Syrian-led transition, which has to be Syrian-led, but has to be a transition. And here I think we have all to invite all the parties that have an influence on the actors inside Syria to, in good faith and commitment, play in a responsible way their part in this Syrian-led transition.

Link to the video:

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