

# Remarks by HR/VP Mogherini upon arrival at the Foreign Affairs Council

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*Check against delivery!*

Good morning.

We have a particularly intense agenda today with the [Foreign Affairs] Ministers.

First and foremost, we will hear from Boris Johnson a debrief on Salisbury. I would expect that we will say something in the course of the morning. So, you will hear a renewed EU position in that respect. What is absolutely clear is our full solidarity with the United Kingdom and our extreme concern about what has happened that is really unacceptable.

We will have a point on the agenda to start with Ukraine. I was in Kyiv exactly one week ago to pass a message of full support, both to the full implementation of the Minsk Agreements, the non-recognition policy of the annexation of Crimea that we consider illegal and we do not recognise, and also our full support to the reform agenda of Ukraine. We will discuss that with Ministers and I would expect we will reconfirm our full support, both political and financial, to the country.

We will then have a special guest, Staffan de Mistura, United Nations Special Envoy for Syria. He will update us on the state of play -which looks rather bleak to say the least. It will be important to prepare with the United Nations our upcoming Brussels Conference that is going to happen at the end of April. It would be very important to use it to call for a full implementation of the latest UN Security Council Resolution. We see developments on the ground are getting worse and [we express] our full support to the cease-fire and call for the Astana guarantors to guarantee what they have agreed, including the de-escalation zones.

Last but not least, we have another two points - I told you today it is a busy agenda, we will finish late. We will have at lunch the Foreign Minister of South Korea [Kang Kyung-wha] who will debrief us on the state of play, on the talks that are going to start with a Summit between the two Presidents, the open invitation to President [of the United States, Donald] Trump for a Summit also with the DPRK [Democratic People's Republic of Korea]. The European Union has the toughest sanctions regime ever on the DPRK but we have always intended to have sanctions to encourage dialogue. So, we will discuss with her ways in which the European Union can support these diplomatic efforts at best.

And we will have a point on Iran. We had the Joint Commission monitoring the implementation of the nuclear deal just on Friday; I will update the Ministers on the good results we had during this meeting. We will discuss ways in which we can keep the full implementation of the nuclear deal with Iran.

***Q. Can you talk about the sanctions that France, Great Britain and Germany have proposed against Iran?***

No, there is no proposal of additional sanctions against Iran. The focus today will be on continuing the full implementation of the nuclear deal. All three, but also Russia, China, the United States and Iran, just assessed on Friday that the deal is being implemented and that we all stay committed to its full implementation. The focus will be on this today. As you know very well, we have other issues we discuss with Iran separately, and it is important to keep this separate. In particular, as we discuss Syria or as we discuss regional issues, the role of Iran comes on the table. But it is extremely important to keep the nuclear deal separated from the discussions we have on regional issues. As I said, it is clearly not a matter of adding sanctions - no proposal in this respect today and clearly, no decision.

***Q. In relation to Russia, will there be additional sanctions, will there be a common resolution in relations with Russia and the Skripal case?***

Today, as I said, first and foremost we will listen to Boris Johnson. I was in contact with him and we agreed that he would debrief the Ministers. We will have a discussion and, as I said, I think - I expect - you will hear from us, altogether, 28 [Member States], in the course of the morning with common positions.

***Q. Do you think there will be unity from all 28 [Member States] on the situation with Russia and what do you think might be a proportionate response?***

I always expect unity and so far I have never disappointed you.

***Q. On the situation in Afrin. More than one million people were evacuated from the city. Are you worried about this?***

I am worried about this. We have stated from the beginning that military escalation, military activities not targeted directly against Da'esh or Al-Nusra - the listed UN terrorist organisations - should be absolutely avoided, because the common sense and the common work was aiming at de-escalating the military activities, and not escalating them. This was, first and foremost, the attempt that the three guarantors of the Astana process - Turkey, Russia and Iran - started in Astana, we welcome that and we now call for coherence. If you worked on de-escalation zones, you are expected to work on de-escalation zones and guarantee that this is what happens on the ground. We will discuss this, as I said, with the UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura, and you will hear more from me in the course of the afternoon.

***Q. On Iran and ballistic missiles.***

As you know, the European Union has sanctions in place on Iran for non-nuclear related issues. This is already there. So far, at the moment, I do not expect discussions on further sanctions to be started, as I mentioned already. I would expect today the discussion to be focused, first and foremost, on how to keep the full implementation of the nuclear deal, as

it is being fully implemented now, also for the future, especially following a very good Joint Commission meeting we had on Friday altogether, with all the parties and with Iran. I think the main message today would be this: keep the course on the full implementation of the nuclear deal, and separately, address regional issues, including issues related to the ballistic missiles on which the European Union has always had a very clear position. Let me say: we have a high level political dialogue with Iran addressing the regional issues, that is something substantial, especially on Yemen, leading to some - I would say - encouraging results, not good yet but encouraging. So, I will expect the discussion to be focused mainly on that.

Thank you.

Link to the video: <https://ec.europa.eu/avservices/video/player.cfm?ref=I152835>

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