European External Action Service (EEAS)

Speech by HRVP Federica Mogherini at the "Common challenges for Europe. A strategy for foreign and security policy" public event at the Nobel Peace Centre

2016-06-13

Børge, Director Tørres,

I am really honoured to see so many friends and passionate Norwegians of the European Union's foreign and security policy in this room. And I am really honoured to be here at the Nobel Peace Centre, a place that represents so much for the world, and for Europe in particular.

Before I say anything else, let me thank the Norwegian Nobel Committee for awarding our European Union the Nobel Peace Prize. I understand that this is the first chance that a high-level European official has taken the floor on such a stage after that happened, and I feel particularly honoured to be the one to do so.

Here I am not speaking as a politician, thanking for the Nobel Peace Prize given to the European Union, I am not speaking as the Union’s High Representative. Here I am speaking to thank the Committee as a citizen of our Union, and someone who believes in the European project.

Too many of our citizens are forgetting what Europe is all about. Our friends and partners around the globe look at us and see a peaceful, rich and democratic continent, with some problems, yes, but strong. An oasis in the regional and global chaos. An oasis with some problems, yes, but still one of the strongest places in the world and one of the most attractive ones. And we, the citizens of our Union, too often forget about it.

We take peace and democracy for granted, and we forget how they were achieved. We do not see that our Union faces the risk, for the first time ever in our history, to move backwards and not forward.

In recent months, the strongest recognition of our Union came from two great men from the Americas: President Obama and Pope Francis. In 2012 it was the Norwegian Nobel Committee, reminding us the value of our Union. And you, my friends, here in Norway, look at our Union from a very special observatory.

The Nobel Peace Prize acknowledged seventy years of peace in Europe. But this award has never been a simple recognition of past achievements. The European Union was awarded the prize in December 2012 – one of the most difficult moments in the European Union's history, at the height of the debt crisis. It was not just an award in my view: it was first of all an endorsement of a very courageous project, and a wake-up call for Europe.

The Nobel Peace Prize shines a light on the way forward. It is about our history, for sure, but even more about our present and future. It embraces our hopes and aspirations and those of our peoples in Europe. Look at all the winners, their names and their stories. If you connect the dots, they compose a textbook for the peacemakers, a manifesto for global peace.

The Committee has pointed at leaders of great world powers, such as Gorbachev or Obama, and at dissidents, such as Martin Luther King. It has praised the international institutions, and the struggle of individual citizens for freedom and a more just economy. It glorified the power of education, with the Prize to Malala, and the patient strength of democracy and human rights, awarding Aung San Suu Kyi 15 years before she became a Minister of her country.

It paid tribute to Rabin, Peres and Arafat, to Begin and Sadat, because only diplomacy can show the way out of a long conflict. And last year, it hinted at the hard work, maybe the hardest one, of post-conflict reconciliation, with the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet.

Put all these stories together and you will get a vision for global peace. And such a vision is incredibly close to our own vision, the European way to peace and security.

These ideals and aspirations resonate with the Global Strategy I am about to present to the European Council. And let me anticipate that our vision for foreign policy is incredibly close to Norway’s vision - and this is no surprise.

I see it every time, we work together with Børge, be it on the Middle East peace process, or on our Transatlantic cooperation, in Colombia, in Africa, or everywhere in the world. And it emerges very clearly from the Norwegian Government’s contribution to the Strategy. We are “like-minded” partners for real and we share values and interests, let alone history and geography. And I believe the discussion we had over the last few months on our strategy, also with Norway, has helped us realise how close we are. And I know that seen from here, being a country that has a very high profile on peace-making, mediation and foreign policy, and with a strong focus on the multilateral and the international system, you might have some doubts on the role that the European Union plays or can play in that framework.

Still, let me tell you one thing that I always remind our European Union's citizens and institutions and colleagues in national governments and parliaments. If you put together the presence of the European Union and Member States everywhere in the world, from Argentina to Canada, from Korea to South Africa, to the Mediterranean, you have the number one donor, you have the number one investor, you have the number one trade partner and you have the number one diplomatic network and mediation efforts in the globe. This is the

diplomatic, economic and development superpower that the European Union represents. We only have one minor problem: sometimes we do not see our strength and so we do not see how to use it.

This is also why the Global Strategy we are going to present will help us to use the strength we have towards a common direction and a common goal.

Throughout this process of reflexion, strategic reflexion, I have seen a strong consensus emerge – both on the goals of our foreign policy, and on how we want to achieve them. We want to make our citizens more secure, and to promote an international order that is based on rules.

To this aim, we have spotted five broad priorities, the starting point for the work ahead.

First, the European Union must strengthen itself. And this is not only important for our citizens, but for the whole continent. A stronger role for the European Union in the globe starts in Europe.

Børge said it very clearly in his address to the Norwegian Parliament a few months ago: “Europe’s challenges are Norway’s challenges.” Our borders are your borders, our security is your security – and vice versa. A stronger Europe needs that we build up our defence and that we do it in our European way which means in a cooperative and comprehensive manner. Our security needs our intelligence services to work together. It needs us to work against radicalisation and for social inclusion and integration – this is also part of security in our societies. It needs to monitor hybrid threats and strengthen our energy security, with Norway as an important partner also in this field. We need to preserve the Schengen system with new asylum rules. In a phrase, we need a 21st century approach to security. One that is not limited to the military aspect of security but which extends to the broad spectrum of fields, I would say, of human security – a concept that we use outside of Europe but not so often inside. And Norway also needs us to decisively move towards this new approach. In today’s world, my neighbour’s weakness is my own weakness, and my neighbour’s strength is my own strength – a concept that we should all recognise fully.

For this very reason, we need to invest on the resilience of States and societies in and around Europe – and this is our second priority. This is about economy and development – as good jobs are the best antidote against conflict and radicalisation. But this is also about good governance, and the rule of law and human rights – because we all know that only democracy can make a society strong and resilient. Some say you have to choose: security versus democracy and open societies. This is a false dilemma. As a European I would say it is a wrong dilemma. Inside our own countries and outside, the best way to security is democracy and open societies: this is the European way.

At the same time, as we work at strengthening the societies and the institutions around us we must also deal with the urgencies of our day and age. And they are too many. So the third

priority is an integrated approach to crisis to put an end to the current conflicts in our region and beyond. From Syria to Colombia, the European Union and Norway already cooperate to a great extent.

But let me briefly focus on the conflict between Israel and Palestine. It feels like too many in the world keep forgetting about it, until the next terrorist attack – quite too often - or the next flare of violence. I know this is not the case here for Norway: first of all because Oslo means a lot in that respect for the Middle East - and not only for the past, but also because the entire international community recognises your leadership in the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee. And it is always a pleasure for me to work together in that endeavour.

My first trip as High Representative was to Tel Aviv, Ramallah, Jerusalem and Gaza. Our Union has put a lot of energy in reviving the Middle East Quartet. And the Quartet will soon publish a report describing the policies that threaten the viability of a two-State solution. We will also make clear recommendations on the way forward with one main goal: try to recreate some confidence – I do not say confidence, but some confidence - between the two sides, and the conditions to go back to meaningful negotiations. We will need the whole international community to shore up this effort. And I know we can always count on Norway in this respect, as ever. And we are working very closely with our Arab friends and partners – whose role today is more crucial than ever.

And I also get now to the forth priority that has a lot to do with regional dynamics because conflicts today - be it in the Middle East or others - are increasingly trans-national. There is not one single crisis of today's world that can be contained only within traditional national boundaries. So regional cooperation becomes more vital every day. And this is no surprise for a continent like Europe because we built our strength and peace on the decision to invest in regional cooperation in Europe, overcoming centuries of conflicts among us and finding ways to turn enemies into partners. And it worked, against no one, for the sake and the benefit of all. The European Union way is this: regional cooperation and strong partnerships with strong partners. We are aware of our role in the world, of our own responsibilities, but we want to share them. We want to work together with strong partners.

This is why our teamwork with NATO - and again with Norway in the framework of NATO - can only grow stronger and especially now with the Warsaw Summit coming up. And I would like to thank my friend Jens Stoltenberg for the amazing job he has done so far and for making our cooperation so easy and so effective.

There are so many new fields to explore, from coordination against human smugglers in the Aegean to the recent collaboration arrangements on cyber security. And our security today is an ever more tangled matter: complementarity is something we simply cannot do without.

The threats are growing in number and in complexity. And today it is even more important to engage with all players in our region – to the South, to the East, and in the High North. And I do not say this only because I am in Oslo. I say it also when I am further down in Malta or in

Strasbourg in the European Parliament or in Brussels. We just adopted recently our new strategy for the Arctic. Because the Arctic region is for us - the European Union, not only for the Member States that have and share a Nordic dimension – a key area. Be it on environmental protection, be it on economic and social development, be it on safety and security in the Arctic. Because we see that the Arctic region has so far been a good example of regional cooperation and we can only hope to continue and strengthen this trend. And the European Union is ready to do its part in that respect.

In this field – and in others – Russia has in some cases played a cooperative role. In fact, one of the biggest strategic issues for us all for the years to come is whether it will or it will not be possible to engage with Russia in a more cooperative way. On this too, our Union and Norway are very much like-minded partners. Our support for international law will not waver, never.

The European Union's Foreign Affairs Council agreed very recently that we will keep working on the implementation of Minsk, on a strong relation with our Eastern partners, on our resilience and on hybrid threats, and on our engagement with Russia's civil society. Because we do not want to lose a whole generation of Russian people to the European values and perspectives. At the same time, we also decided – together and united – to have a selective engagement with Russia on all matters where our cooperation is vital for the European Union, for regional security or for the entire world. This can be true from the Middle East Peace Process, where we work well together with Russia; this is true for Syria, where we sit together in a sometimes challenging and difficult International Syria Support Group, where Russia has - together with the United States - a role that it is important, and many other different global issues.

This leads me to the last priority – that is, moving towards a better global governance: one that truly fit for our age. If you look back, this was a year of important achievements for the international community: from the deal with Iran to the Sustainable Development Goals, to COP21. Let me tell you that we always focus on the shortcomings, the crises and the conflicts, and we have far too many. But we also we have to keep in mind the success stories. First of all, because they tell you that yes, sometimes diplomacy and mediation and multilateralism work and bring results. It needs more time, it needs more determination, it is probably less glamorous, but sometimes it works - and when it works, it works for real. So we need to invest in a multilateral system based on rules. Here again: I know that Norway and the European Union are exactly on the same side.

But we must also be imaginative and creative, because the feeling I have it is that the international system doesn't simply need conservation, but change, profound change. Because the world has changed and our multilateral institutions have to reflect that change.

Our Union and Norway have always worked side by side, in international organisations and in all kinds of multilateral formats.

You look at the map, and you'll see part of the reason. But it's not just geography because neighbours don't always think alike. This is about the ties among our peoples – so close that a foreigner like me can barely hear the difference among the different various Scandinavian languages. It is about the ideals that inspire the Norwegian Nobel Committee, as well as our European institutions, which are the same.

Your values are part of our European values and I am sure that our European values are part of your values. Your culture – let me just name Ibsen – is part of our common European culture. Your youth is our youth. The young people killed in Utoya are our own young people, they are children of Europe. Let me share with you a personal note if I can. I was in Oslo for the first time some twenty years ago. I was 23 and I was here for a congress of my political youth movement. So, whenever someone tells me that Europe's youngsters are growing cynical, and have no ideals, no commitment, I think of the victims of Utoya. I think of what brought them there - that were the same things that brought me here twenty years ago: the passion, the will to commit to something bigger than just themselves. That can also be peace and justice in the world.

And I think of what killed them: the fear of diversity. Some in our societies think that refusing diversity is a sign of strength. That is rather the opposite. Only when your identity is clear and strong, you are not afraid of the other. Fear of diversity is the most common sign of weakness of our times and our societies, and the most dangerous one as we also saw in Orlando just yesterday. But it is dangerous not only to the security of our citizens and our societies. It is dangerous because it could make us give up what is most precious: that is diversity and openness, that made and makes our societies, our cultures, our countries, our European Union and Norway, strong.

After Utoya, Norway has not given up its values. You are still committed, living your diversities, your openness, your aspiration to peace, your believe in peace, which is not a good feeling. It is rational, it is an investment in security. We all need to keep that in mind.

The challenge comes from inside our societies, as much as from the outside. We know that very well in the European Union. It's a challenge we all face. Our only chance of success is to face it together. Divided we fall, united we stand – inside our Union and outside our Union. Also saying that very clearly together as Europeans - inside and outside our Union – together we stand united. Thank you.

Link to the video: http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/video/player.cfm?ref=I122715

<div

Source: http://eeas.europa.eu/statements-eeas/2016/160614_01_en.htm (EU Web Archive capture 20160624095012)