Syria – Bonino at Foreign Affairs Council – “Political solution the only way”. Visit to Jordan for refugee emergency

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“The only solution to the Syrian crisis is the political solution”, as Foreign Minister Emma Bonino underscored at the end of the Foreign Affairs Council in Luxembourg. The “Geneva 2” peace conference is the only way, as the Minister reiterated at the “Friends of Syria” meeting in Doha on Saturday 22 June. And the conference should be supported in the run-up to the UN-USA-Arab League meeting on 25 June 2013.

Refugee emergency – Bonino in Jordan

After the Council in Luxembourg, Bonino left for Jordan with the EU Development Cooperation Commissioner, Kristalina Georgieva. There she will tackle another very complicated issue: ensuring that the neighbouring countries can cope with the burden of the refugee emergency. “It is vitally important to understand that a political solution must also encompass the situation in neighbouring countries”, minister Bonino explained. She pointed out that “there are one million Syrian refugees in Lebanon, while Jordan has 150,000 in the Zaatri camp alone, and half a million in the country as a whole. All of this is an incredible burden for the social, health and education services”.

Turkey: Europe needs to show credibility

Turkey’s accession to the European Union was another issue addressed by the European foreign ministers, against the background of the sharp social tensions in the country in recent weeks. Minister Bonino explained that an agreed solution must be found but that “Europe must not lose its credibility. The criticisms that we needed to express, we have expressed with great determination. But maybe some of us should examine our consciences. Because if Europe had shown greater credibility, the shortened the timescale and opened the chapters on human rights, then we would have had more scope for dialogue with the Turks”.

Serbia and Kosovo – set dates needed

The next European Council in Brussels on 27 June “will have two important decisions to take”, on Turkey and the Serbia-Kosovo question. Because, as Bonino underscored, “Europe is more than just a fiscal compact or spread”. On Serbia and Kosovo, pacta sunt servanda –

agreements must be kept. The EU must give Serbia and Kosovo a set date for the opening of negotiations on access and on the stabilisation and association agreement, after the two countries have respected their commitment to find an agreement.

Afghanistan: Bilateral with Rasmussen, neighbours must be involvedOn Afghanistan, Bonino pointed out that “there can be no stabilisation without a regional will to achieve it”. In other words, without the involvement of Pakistan, Iran and India. During her bilateral meeting with NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, Minister Bonino did not hide the fact that she places scant hope on the dialogue in Doha between the Taliban and President Karzai.

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