EU Foreign Affairs Council – Syria: Geneva II the only way, says Bonino. Bilateral with Ashton

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The European foreign ministers will be focusing today on the Syrian dossier, which will be among principal agenda items that include the Middle East, Afghanistan and Turkey, during the Foreign Affairs Council in Luxembourg, where Minister Emma Bonino will be representing Italy.

Syria: maximum support for opposition

Syria is an item on which Minister Bonino – just back from Saturday's meeting of the Friends of Syria in Doha – will reconfirm Italy's maximum support for the international Geneva II Conference. Expected also, with regard to Syria, is discussion of a new €400 million aid package announced by EU Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso and EU High Representative for Foreign Policy Catherine Ashton. In Doha, the 11 Arab and Western participants of the Friends of Syria agreed on the need to reinforce support for the Syrian opposition, with all ground support to come through the rebels' Supreme Council, and to "keep alive, indeed fuel, the process leading" to the peace conference, as Foreign Minister Emma Bonino commented, according to whom Geneva II is the only way. The Doha participants also encouraged the Syrian opposition to assume a more stable political leadership.

Middle East peace process

Minister Bonino will hold a bilateral meeting with Ashton in the margins of the Council, in which they are expected to confront the Middle East peace process and, in particular, the resumption of negotiations by the U.S.; Italy firmly confirms the need for European support for the efforts of U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry.

Serbia-Kosovo Dialogue

Expected from Ashton is an update on the status of dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo. Italy – as Minister Bonino reiterated in the course of visits last week to Belgrade and Pristina – will do everything possible to encourage the establishment of clear start dates for EU accession negotiations with Belgrade and an Association and Stabilisation Agreement (ASA) with Pristina.

Afghanistan, Arab Spring, Eastern Partnership

Other agenda items included European policies and instruments aimed at fostering political and economic transition in the countries of the Arab Spring, Afghanistan (a few days from the announcement of the fifth and final phase of the transition process ahead of the Afghan presidential elections on 2014) and the Eastern Partnership, which will find the ministers confronting preparations for the July ministerial meeting with country partners and the December Vilnius summit.

Afghanistan, Primavere Arabe, Partenariato Orientale

Tra gli altri temi in agenda, le politiche europee e gli strumenti di assistenza alla transizione politica ed economica nei Paesi delle Primavere arabe, l’Afghanistan (a pochi giorni dall’annuncio della quinta e ultima fase del processo di transizione e in vista delle presidenziali afghane del 2014), il Partenariato Orientale, che vedrà i ministri affrontare la preparazione della riunione ministeriale con i Paesi partner di luglio e quella del vertice di Vilnius di novembre.

Source :
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