Remarks by EU HR/VP Federica Mogherini at joint press conference with Marina Kaljurand, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Estonia, Tallin

2015-08-24

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Thank you very much Marina. It is a pleasure for me being here and an honour being invited to address the conference of the Ambassadors - some of them I have had the chance and honour again to meet during my visits where they are posted. And it is moreover for me and again a pleasure to be visiting Estonia and I apologise for not coming before. But it's really great to be here today on this occasion that I have in visiting all the Capital cities of the 28 Member States, to discuss together – with different interlocutors in the governments, and not only – the Common European Foreign and Security Policy.

We are 28 different, very different Member States. Different for geography, history, politics but very much united when it comes to our common values, our common interests. And at no other time like today, we realise how importartant it is to stick together and to make sure that our union is true and truly united Europe, a true Union.

When we are united, when we act united, we are stronger and we have the possibility to achieve the goals we want to reach; being it on security and defence – and defence today goes much broader than purely military –and, as here you know very well, including cyber security; being it relations with our partners in our neighbourhood, East and South; being it on big global issues we face together in the UN, with NATO, with our main partners around the world, starting with the United States. On the difficult global issues we need to face starting from migration as we discussed at length but also other issues.

We have had our first proper bilateral after you took office Marina, it's really a pleasure working with you and it has been a pleasure having you at the Foreign Affairs Council, your first Foreign Affairs Council in July. I am looking forward to continue working with you very closely, coordinating very closely in these coming months.

And let me add that, to me, this was also an occasion to exchange views with the Minister, with the Ambassadors and with the interlocutors I will have the privilege to meet later today, especially on the security situation of the region, the situation in Ukraine, in the other countries of the Eastern Partnership and on our relations with Russia.

Let me stress all our solidarity and our closeness with the Estonian people, to the Estonian authorities, for the police officer that is detained in Russia. We discussed that over the phone last week, and I had the chance of releasing a statement immediately after we knew the decision taken by the Court. We will continue to follow the case closely and to work together. Not only on this respect but also on other issues that are of common concern.

Our unity means that we are united in our common positions and that we shape our policies together and that we show solidarity on all issues that are important in our Member States, no matter how big or small, or new or old, or North or South or East or West, we are one and it is for me always a pleasure and a privilege to be able to work so closely with a Foreign Minister of a Member State - and with Marina it is also a personal pleasure. Thank you very much.

Q & A

Q: On the situation regarding Eston Kohver

As you know very well, we cannot, as European Union, obviously take concrete measures to have him back. You would not expect that to happen probably, but still, we discussed concrete steps and measures that European Union is taking to support the Estonian authorities in their work. Our main task is to support the Member States in these difficult circumstances. I understand that these are crucial days, the ones that come, and we obviously will continue to closely, very closely coordinate our actions, our statements and our steps together with the Estonian authorities and in coordination with the family of the Officer obviously as well. It is not for the European Union to step in but to support and to back the Estonian authorities' activities, steps and initiatives as much as it can be useful for the Estonian authorities and for the Officer himself.

Q: On EU action towardsnon-EU countries dealing with the migrant crisis

Normally, I tend to avoid answering questions that do not relate closely to the issues we discussed. What we discussed related to migration with Marina – with the Minister – is first of all the aspects that are linked to our work, which is the external one. Our work to help, facilitate, try to reach a solution to the crises and the conflicts that are open around us. As we know,these flows of refugees are coming mainly from crises areas, starting from Syria, but also Afghanistan and others, and this relates very much to our work with the Foreign Ministers and in my capacity as High Representative. And obviously, the work we do with the countries of origin and transit to manage the flows together with them.

In this case, I will do an exception, because in my capacity as the Vice-President of the Commission I also share the responsibility of the presentation of the Agenda on Migration that the Commission presented last spring and the work we have done with the Council also in this respect.

And I would say that we are working very closely with the countries of the Western Balkans to tackle this issue, that again, as I mentioned, is less related to Foreign Policy and more to the relations with the region and to the European Union as such. And, as you might know, we are planning to have soon a conference dealing especially with this aspect of the flows that are passing through the Balkans. This refers more to aspects that are linked to internal policies of the Union rather than to the Foreign policy of the European Union, if not on the aspects linked to the crises that generate the flows of refugees. That is why I am coordinating, I am working with my colleagues in the Commission that are mainly responsible for this,who are Vice-President Timmermans and Commissioner Avramopoulos, and obviously the Enlargement Commissioner Hahn.

Q: On contacts with Mr Lavrov

I met Minister Lavrov quite recently actually, while we were negotiating the Iranian deal we were spending quite some time together. I also met him in Kuala Lumpur in Asia on the 7 August for the Asia Regional Forum and I guess I will meet him again in New York in the UN General Assembly, as I think will be the case for many of us. This is one of the issues that we constantly raise, not only me personally, but also through our delegation in Moscow. The Russians know very well where we stand on this case and what our position is, and as I said, we coordinate in a very positive way our public messages and our steps together with the Minister all along the way. So, yes, sure we raise it, not only publicly, but also when we meet.

Q: On Turkey and migration issue

You should ask the Turkish Foreign Minister probably.

You used a word that we often use without realising that actually it hides a different kind of story. You said the migrants or refugees come from Turkey, as well as we normally say when it is the case of refugees coming to for instance Italy or Malta, fromLibya. These refugees comethrough Libya or throughTurkey, but their origin is in a different place.

That is why we are increasing our level of cooperation with Turkey to manage the flow. Turkey itself has a huge issue of welcoming and hosting refugees from Syria that I think is close to 2 million people. I myself visited the refugee camp in Gaziantep at the border between Turkey and Syria some months ago, and I think that in this story of this huge migration flow and refugees flow that we are experiencing due to the large number of crises we have around us, we have to realise that the blame game is not bringing any kind of positive result for any of us. The main point is not saying who is doing his homework or not. The point is how do we face together the challenge and how do we manage together the issue. Again, from a European perspective we are asking Turkey to do more. Turkey itself is hosting millions of refugees, we should be aware of that, and we are already supporting Turkey in this. But again, what we should do more is to work together also with Turkey, but also with other countries, not only to support them in hosting this large number of refugees, but also to help in the management of the flow and most of all, to try to solve the root causes,

which is in this case the Syrian conflict, but also the destabilisation of Afghanistan, when it comes to the route that goes through Turkey to Greece, or when it comes to the route that is going through Libya to Malta and Italy, to stabilise the situation in the Sahel in the Horn of Africa, in the Western part of Africa, and first and foremost, to try to find - finally- a government of National Unity in Libya that can allow us to work together with the Libyan authorities to fight the smugglers and the traffickers of human beings and to put an end to the trafficking.

Q: On the release of Estonian and British ship guards detained in India?

This is an issue we discussed with the Minister; this is an issue we discussed in the European Parliament some months ago, in the presence of Estonian Members of Parliament, but also others from all the different political groups.

What I can say – obviously in full respect of the Indian judicial system - is that the EU is always ready and willing to support its Member States in the steps and in the decisions that they take when it comes to this kind of cases. This is also the case when it comes to this case. I assured the Minister that she can count on my personal commitment, to not only follow closely the situation, but also give all the needed support and will. All the support that is not only needed but also required and desired from the Estonian authorities to find – hopefully - a quick solution and respectful of the situation of the people involved, that I understand on the humanitarian basis could be considered.

Whatch the video:http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/video/player.cfm?ref=I107868

<div

Source: http://eeas.europa.eu/statements-eeas/2015/150824_02_en.htm (EU Web Archive capture 20160625093325)