European External Action Service (EEAS)

Foreign Affairs Council: Press remarks by High Representative Kaja Kallas upon arrival

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Check against delivery!

Good morning, everybody.

We have a full day ahead. So, first we discuss, of course, the war in Ukraine. And we expect some positive decisions tomorrow on the €90 billion loan. Ukraine really needs this loan, and it is also a sign that Russia cannot outlast Ukraine. This is extremely important at this moment.

Then we have the discussions on the Middle East. We have the Lebanese Prime Minister joining us to give a full feedback and picture of what is the state of play, also with their discussions with Israel, but also the state of play in Lebanon and how we can help them. We have the discussions also regarding, the mission UNIFIL ending this year. So, what more can we do as Europeans.

Then on the Middle East, of course, what is happening in the war of Iran. It is clear that the freedom of navigation cannot be replaced by pay-for-passage schemes. We are supporting diplomatic solutions, but it is also clear that the worries, in addition to the nuclear aspect, have to be addressed. When it comes to the missile programmes, when it comes to the hybrid and cyber threats, when it comes to also the support to proxies and support to Russia. So, that is something that we are, of course, discussing.

And the discussion is also going to be what is happening in the West Bank.

Yesterday, we had two very good meetings regarding Palestine. We had over 60 countries present in order to support Palestine. We are the biggest supporters of Palestine, and really to show that there has to be a Palestinian-owned and Palestinian-led process in order to have stability in the region.

Then we are discussing South Caucasus.

For us, Armenia, Azerbaijan, the normalisation of their relationship is extremely important. And we are also going to discuss a new mission for Armenia and how we can further work with their relations with Azerbaijan. Of course, we are also discussing what is happening in

Georgia and, our approach to this has been very firm. We are supporting Georgian people, but not the Georgian government that takes this in the wrong direction.

And then finally, we have discussions on Sudan. We are supporting the civilian-led process. Once there is a ceasefire that civilians could be taking over the governance of the country.

And, of course, a lot of other issues, like Syria, we will have a meeting next month, and we are decided to unsuspend the cooperation agreement that we have suspended with Syria, we are also restarting negotiations with the Syrians on the Association Agreement.

Thank you.

Q&A

Q. The situation is extremely volatile, we do not know what will happen if there will be an end to the ceasefire, but what can the EU do? They are just looking from the sidelines, because Trump for example, he is threatening to bomb bridges, to bomb infrastructure.

We are not looking from sidelines. We are actually actively working with regional partners, because we have the same concerns. They know Iran better than anybody, and in order to strengthen the hand of the negotiators around that negotiating table. Of course, the ceasefire is very fragile, but diplomacy should have a chance. So, I hope that the ceasefire is also extended until there is a diplomatic solution.

Q. After the elections in Hungary, can we expect that personal sanctions issue will be on the table and can it move forward, what do you think? And little bit more details on what will be your message to colleagues at closed doors?

I, of course, cannot speak for the new Hungarian government. Once they have been settled, then they come and we can ask all these question to them. But, a lot of issues that have been blocked, we are reopening the discussions and hope that we get a positive result.

Q. Which steps taken by Georgia [inaudible] not the exact way? Could you name one example?

Like I said, today the majority of discussions will be on Armenia and Azerbaijan. For the Georgian government, we have been very clear that the path that they are taking - the repression of opposition, the limitation of media or the laws that have been accepted, are not acceptable to us. So, we need to see really some progress there. But as I have a press conference later on, so I will leave this to my colleagues.

Link to the video: https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/media/video/I-287971

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