European External Action Service (EEAS)

Foreign Affairs Council (Development): Press remarks by High Representative Josep Borrell ahead of the meeting

2022-05-20 · Brussels · EEAS Press Team

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Good morning,

Warm welcome Filippo [Grandi, High Commissioner for Refugees]. It is the first time that Filippo Grandi is attending a meeting of the Foreign Affairs Council in the Development format.

It is much appreciated that you could be here, because the refugee crisis is growing all over the world. Not only in Ukraine.

Last year I remember that the figure was about 84 – 85 million people all around the world. I am afraid that after the war against Ukraine the figure will be bigger, because in Ukraine we have seen the biggest movement of refugees in Europe since World War II. The figures are – and Filippo will update [them] - with the most recent ones.

But for Europeans, Ukraine is not the only crisis – neither for you [Filippo Grandi]. We have to continue paying attention to other refugee crises, which are there, becoming chronic. Let us think about Myanmar, Afghanistan, Venezuela, the Sahel. So many that we have to continue strengthening our partnership and our joint efforts, Filippo.

Q&A

Q. What do you think about the suggestion made at the end of last year by [your] predecessor, Federica Mogherini, on a report about a Global Fund for internally displaced people? Do you think that idea has merit and should be pursued?

It has to be a Team Europe approach; the European budget is the European budget, and it cannot have deficits. So, our resources are limited and we have to distribute them, but we cannot increase them by miracle. We are not forgetting the other refugee crises; some days ago we helped the Syrian refugees [at the sixth Brussels Conference on 'Supporting the future of Syria and the Region'] successfully, because we got the same amount of money as last year. And 75% of these €6 billion come from the European Union Member States and institutions. So, no, we are not forgetting about the Syrians. We are trying to do everything we

can. You [Filippo Grandi] are going to Bangladesh, I will go to Jordan in 10 days from now. But, certainly, Ukraine has represented a matter of urgency, because of the mass.

Q. Would you think the EU budget as it stands, the famous NDICI instrument, is fit for purpose in a world where we are seeing so many humanitarian crises? And indeed, it is very heavy on development funding, but it is quite light on humanitarian funding. Is it fit for purpose for the next 6 years?

It is not fit for purpose, seeing the gravity [of the situation]. When we did this budget, the Ukrainian crisis was not on the radar screen, so, we could not foresee what is happening to the Ukrainian people today. But do not forget that when we talk about Team Europe, it is not just about the European Union's budget, it is part of it. Team Europe means putting together the capacities of the Member States and the European institutions, trying to coordinate and make it a matter of leverage all together. And today, why do we call the Ministers [to come] here [for the Foreign Affairs Council (Development)]? Why do we call them? To create global action and to create coordinated action among us.

Q. My question is about the Team Europe initiatives. Of course, the [European] Commission would like to steer everyone, but we have been waiting for months for Member States to put money on the table and for Portugal, Germany, France or Spain to say actually "what you said is a good idea, and we are not going to spend money on Mozambique or Niger, we are going to spend the money where the Commission wants to spend it". So far, they are not doing that. And you mentioned that you are bringing the Ministers here. When you look at the participants' list, it is Political and Security Committee (PSC) Ambassadors and Deputy Secretaries, the Ministers do not come. Do FAC Development meetings still make sense? Are the Member States taking the Team Europe spirit seriously enough?

Certainly it is not an easy task, because each Member State has its own dynamics and responsibilities. That is why I am trying to make it more pressing by putting political pressure. Nothing comes from the sky, you have to build it.

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