

Doorstep remarks by HRVP Federica Mogherini upon arrival to the 2016 Munich Security Conference

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Good morning.

Just to comment briefly the meeting we had last night - very long meeting. Today I can comment on the fact that it is extremely positive the fact that after six long hours of meeting we have reached an agreement with all the members of the International [Syria] Support Group to first work on concrete terms on humanitarian access and delivery.

The meeting of the task force today at 4p.m. in Geneva will be a crucial one. The European Union team is already on its way to be there in Geneva. The European Union is the first humanitarian donor in Syria so our role will be crucial in this respect and we will work hand-in-hand with the United Nations to make sure that access to the Syrians who are suffering the most is guaranteed, that humanitarian aid is delivered and that Syrians on the ground can see from today, from tomorrow, an immediate turn when it comes to their humanitarian situation.

Second it is very important that the [International Syria Support] Group agreed also on a task force on the cessation of hostilities. This is going to be more difficult. This is for sure something that is needed with the exclusion of Da'esh and the terrorist organisations defined as such by the Security Council.

It is going to be essential to make it possible for the talks in Geneva in a climate that it is different from the one we have seen last week. So indeed a very important, very positive step. The European Union is fully committed to make it operational and this is going to be the test of it. It is only an agreement on paper but actions coordinated both on the humanitarian and political level and on the military level to make a difference on the ground.

We know the responsibility we are carrying on our shoulders and on the European Union side we have already started working from today in Geneva. As I said, our team is already on the way

Q. On the meeting with Prime Minister of Georgia Giorgi Kvirikashvili with the visa liberation in the agenda.

A. Yes, I will have a meeting with the Georgian Prime Minister [Giorgi Kvirikashvili] we know each other well. We have always worked well together and we will discuss obviously the bilateral relations also the visa liberalisation. Everything is going well so I am very positive. I am very glad of this meeting and I am sure things will go well.

Q. On the Syrian opposition group being present in Geneva for the talks.

A. They expressed a concern that is fully understandable which is what I mentioned just now. The fact that the talks have to be accompanied by measures on the ground that brings a difference to the Syrian people. This is what we discussed yesterday for six hours in the [International Syria Support] Group. I believe we have the conditions, if all actors from today implement the decisions we are taking tonight, to create a different condition on the ground in Syria.

It is not a matter of preconditions, we have expressively mentioned in all of our decisions that talks start without preconditions, but sure we have to have the conditions to have talks that are done in a sense of good faith and especially that have credibility towards the Syrian people.

It is going to be very difficult for any Syrian on the ground to believe that the process is serious and credible in Geneva if they see their daily life going worse rather than better. So this is the challenge now: to make sure that the life of the Syrian people on the ground, from a humanitarian point of view and from the point of view of the clashes, is getting better and not worse. This would create conditions for the talks to be productive, I believe.

Q. On the refugee flows from Syria.

A. Let me stress very clearly this thing. The work we are doing on Syria, we are doing this not for the sake of European borders but for the sake of Syrian people. This is first of all a humanitarian duty and this is first of all an investment in the security of the region. We are doing this because we know and we believe that only by bringing peace and the transition in Syria we will manage to stabilise the region to prevent a further spread of terrorism and also to make sure that people can live their lives inside their country, in the region, in a quiet place.

Obviously, this will also have a positive effect on the refugee flows but this is not the only engine of our work. And I think yesterday we made very clear, not only as Europeans, but also with the other friends of the region, starting from Jordan and Lebanon and Turkey, that the [International Syria Support] Group also has a responsibility to act in this direction: to make sure that the flows are well managed, that people in need of protection are protected. And the [International Syria Support] Group has a responsibility on this as well.

Link to the video:

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