

Remarks by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini at the press conference with Ayman Safadi, Foreign Minister of Jordan

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It is really a pleasure to be back in Amman. First of all, as you mentioned, as a way of celebrating the 40th anniversary of the European Union's presence in Jordan. And personally, because I have always felt "home" here. Over these five years of common work in very challenging circumstances, we - the European Union that I represent but also me personally - have always valued enormously that we always found in each other strong and reliable partners of wisdom, in times of uncertainty. For me it is only natural to be here on my last official visit to the region in my current capacity, in a partner country that has been a pillar of wisdom and stability in the region in an extremely challenging environment.

I want to start by thanking in advance His Majesty [King Abdullah II of Jordan] for the honour of receiving me later today – an honour that I appreciate enormously. And I am very much looking forward to discussing with him again – as we often did over these last years – our bilateral friendship and partnership, but also the situation in the region. And I want to thank you, Foreign Minister [of Jordan, Ayman] Safadi, my good friend Ayman, for the very constructive exchange we had today, that is part of our constant contact. The last time we met I guess was in New York some ten days ago, the next time we meet is in two days in Barcelona [for the Union for Mediterranean Regional Forum].

This gives you the sense of the intensity and the frequency of our contacts. Every time there is an issue that concerns us both in the European Union and in Jordan in the region, we have always kept this channel of communication and coordination open. I think this has been crucially vital in some of the important and difficult moments that we are facing in this region, that is our common region.

Since my last visit in June 2018, I see that a lot of progress has been made in addressing the country's difficult economic situation and the impact of the Syria crisis on the economy of Jordan. I want to commend Jordan and the Jordanians – all of them – for their resilience in very challenging circumstances and their collective commitment to overcome these difficulties, which is really remarkable. My main message is a very simple one: you can count on the European Union as the main and the most reliable supporter for Jordan and Jordanians. Now, as we have been in the past, and as we will be in the future. This support is going to stay, because we recognise the challenges and we recognise your determination to address those challenges in the most effective and the most correct manner.

As you mentioned, we have hosted a number of Conferences in Brussels, the third one last March, to support Syrians and the region, the neighbours of Syria. I was particularly proud of the results of the last Brussels Conference [on Supporting the future of Syria and the region], where donors collectively allocated €8.3 billion for the region. Two thirds of this money comes from the European Union and its Member States. This is only natural, because we know very well that what happens here is closely linked to the security, stability and also the economic development of Europe itself.

The European Union's support to Jordan comes from that channel but also through several other actions that we have put in place all these years – you [Ayman Safadi] mentioned them all. On this the European Union's commitment is full. We mainly focus on the socio-economic cooperation and the creation of job opportunities, because we know very well that the resilience of a country is based also on the material conditions of its population. We know that very well from our own experience in Europe and this is why we want to propose additional support particularly on this.

This is also why we discussed with the Minister [of Foreign Affairs] the proposal that the European Commission has already adopted and that I presented to the Minister [of Foreign Affairs] today: to provide to Jordan a third micro-financial assistance programme of €500 million. This is now a proposal that is on the table for the approval of the European Parliament and the European Council. I am confident that this decision can be taken in the next couple of months, so that this third package of €500 million can be disbursed early next year.

Obviously, as usual and as it was already the case for the previous two programmes, the disbursement will be conditional on the implementation of specific policies that will be mutually agreed between Jordan and the European Union. Mutually agreeing something has never been a problem between the European Union and Jordan, so that does not worry me too much. We are firm and determined to accompany and support the reforms that the government of Jordan is undertaking, be it on the economic sector, on the public sector or on political reforms. So, we are ready to support the government's reform agenda in all ways we can.

Coming to the regional situation, as usual this has also been an important opportunity for us to exchange notes, compare our analyses and the readings we have of what is happening in the region.

I would just like to mention two of the many issues we have discussed. One is the Syria crisis. Now that the long awaited Constitutional committee has been agreed, it is more important than ever to give a genuine chance to the Geneva Process to restart under the UN auspices and have a restart of political negotiations that can be Syrian-owned and Syrian-led. We see the formation of the Constitutional Committee as a first step – a very important one, but still a first step – on the implementation of the roadmap that has been agreed in the UN framework.

The second point I would like to mention is how grateful Europeans are and how much support the European Union gives to Jordan's special role as a custodian of the Holy Sites in Jerusalem and our common attachment to the status quo put in place in 1967. We share the sense of urgency - and also sometimes I think the sense of frustration when seeing developments on the ground. And we share the same approach when it comes to wishing for a negotiated two-state solution with Jerusalem as the future capital of both states, Israel and Palestine, as the only realistic and viable way to fulfil the legitimate aspirations of both parties and to achieve a long-term, sustainable peace in the region. We count on the key role that Jordan is playing on this.

We have worked together also to address the extremely important issue of the financing, but also the review of the mandate of UNRWA [The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East]. We know how important this is, not only for addressing the humanitarian situation of Palestinian refugees, but also to keep the perspective for a two-state solution open. These are not easy times. But in times that are not easy, it is so important to have good friends and good partners that share the same views and that work in the same direction in a coordinated manner as we have been doing. I am sure we will continue to do so, to at least prevent the worst from happening and to keep the way open for more positive developments to be built when the conditions will be there.

Let me finish by thanking you [Ayman] personally, and thanking also both our teams for building this partnership over the years. And let me also express my commitment that this partnership and friendship will continue with my successor [Josep Borell], who has his hearing this afternoon in the European Parliament and who I know is very much committed to continue to invest as much as I have done, if not more in our partnership and friendship with Jordan.

Thank you very much.

Q. About the EU's support to Jordan

We have been supporting Jordan starting from the economic, social and education sector in the last eight years with 2.2 billion euros – a very relevant envelope of projects that have covered different sectors. I want to stress this because this has not only been a support for the handling of the refugee crisis in Jordan, so it has not only been focused on supporting the way in which Jordan has welcomed Syrian refugees. It has also been very much focused on the support to host communities and to projects in different sectors, job creation, creating opportunities in particular for young people and women. I visited myself over these years several projects that we have financed and where I have seen the impact on the Jordanian population. This has been the top priority for us.

I can also mention some other agreements that we have had and we are developing in these years. I think of the rules of origins that took us a lot of negotiation and work, and that also showed that the European Union has rigid parameters but that it is also able to understand when political flexibility needs to be applied in case of exceptional circumstances. This covers obviously the investment we have done and are doing to

support the economy of Jordan, apart of the financial envelope that I mentioned. With this third programme of micro-financial assistance, obviously we can continue our strong support to the Jordanian economy, and linked very much to the reform agenda that the government has defined.

Q. On Libya

We did not discuss recent developments in Libya during our meeting this time. We did several times on other occasions - actually, we often discuss all the issues we have on our table.

In New York last month I think we had an important step forward when it comes to the situation in Libya – at least on the European perspective. Because we had an important ministerial meeting that was held jointly by Italy and France, with myself present but also the Minister [for Foreign Affairs] of Germany Heiko Maas, the P5 and some of the regional countries present. To me, it was important to first and foremost show the European unity on this file. I know this has sometimes been put into question.

I think that today the European Member States realise that, whatever diverging or competing sectoral interests some of them might have, there is an overarching general interest that all Europeans share that is security and stability in Libya. And I believe also all Arabs and Africans share this objective because it is also when we come together that, Europeans, Africans and Arabs, can help the Libyans unite through our unity. Security and stability in Libya is something complicated that the UN try to manage.

I am and have always been convinced that the Libyans themselves - given the framework of external unity of their partners, friends, neighbors and interlocutors in their respective regions - might be able to find a compromised solution to bring back peace, stability and democracy in the country.

The issue is how to unite the international community in order to make sure that this happens. I see that there are still diverging agendas here and there – I will not enter into the details of course, you know that well. I hope that any meeting that can be convened, being the one in Berlin or being others in the future in other places, can help creating this unity of the international community that is so much needed for the Libyans to unite.

Let me say that I think we have experienced in these last couple of years a good process that has been the Libya Quartet where, following the initiative of the UN, we have gathered several times the League of Arab States, the African Union, the European Union and the United Nations to try and forge this unity. It is a complicated process and I hope that in one way or in the other – I do not attach to much importance to the format – this three worlds – the Arab one, the African one and the European one –, under the leadership and the framework of the UN system, help Libyans unite.

In this obviously, Jordan, as an important Arab country has a contribution to make, it has always made it in a very constructive manner. If problems come, they definitely do not come from Jordan. I hope that we will manage to find a more viable way for Libya through unity.

