

# Doorstep remarks by High Representative / Vice-President Federica Mogherini ahead of the weekly European Commission College meeting

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*Check against delivery*

Good morning.

Tomorrow, we will bring the work we have done on the external part of our strategy on refugees and migration on the European Council's table. I have in these months, worked on different levels. On one side, we have started the High level dialogues with the main countries of origin and transit. First of all North African ones, notably Niger, which is a key country.

I am going on Monday to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to have discussions at the highest level, with the African Union and obviously with the country itself. We will launch a high level dialogue on migration also with them in preparation for the Malta summit in November.

On the Eastern Route, we have also organised High level conference on the Western Balkans and the Eastern Route and launched High level dialogues with Turkey. I had exchanges with the Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers of Lebanon, Jordan, and others. Most of all, we have decided with the Foreign Ministers just a few days ago, to increase our diplomatic work on the solution of the crisis in Syria.

I have received just yesterday an Iranian delegation, who spent the whole day here in Brussels, starting to work with us on possible ways to launch a political process, in parallel with the work that Staffan de Mistura is doing currently. Yesterday, he was in Moscow and then travelling to Washington DC. We are coordinating our efforts to reach out to all the international and regional players and try to have a beginning of the political transition, starting as soon as possible. We have also had talks in this respect with Russia, with Foreign Minister Lavrov, and with the US, Secretary Kerry and we continue to work in this direction.

I would, say, tomorrow, what we bring in the European Council is an external action on migration and refugee crisis that has delivered on the tasks that were given to me by the Council and that were included in the programme of the Commission. Obviously, we don't solve crises and wars from one day to the other. But the work is well on track, Europe is on this united and I am extremely engaged and active on that.

## **Q: On the role of Russia.**

The role of Russia could be extremely important. We all agree, also with Russia, that we need to invest a lot in the UN-led process and that is why the talks that Staffan de Mistura held yesterday in Moscow are very important in this respect. Russia is, and can be, a key

player, when it comes to putting pressure or convincing the regime in Syria to participate to the political process, to the talks, to sit around the table, just as the role of Iran is crucial in this respect. If we want the political situation to move inside Syria, and the political process to start immediately, we need to involve the actors that have an influence, a direct influence on the regime. And that is why both Russia and Iran are crucial. Obviously, we also need to involve the other key regional powers, starting from Turkey and the Gulf countries, starting from Saudi Arabia, to create a framework that puts together the main international actors: the EU, Russia, the US, and the main regional actors, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf, Turkey and Iran, so that we have all the internal Syrian actors committed to a political process. This is what we are working at.

**Q: Sur la possibilité d'avancer vue la situation sur le terrain**

Je pense que, au contraire, l'état de fait sur le plan militaire en Syrie, rend même plus urgent, le début, le commencement d'un processus politique. Tout le monde se rend bien compte - les européens sans aucun doute - qu'il n'y a pas de voie militaire à la solution de la crise. Il faut que, en parallèle avec l'engagement militaire contre Da'esh, il y ait aussi, assez vite, le début d'un processus politique. Les deux vont ensemble. C'est ce que nous avons discuté et le fait sur lequel nous sommes d'accord, dans l'Union européenne. Les deux processus vont ensemble, doivent aller ensemble.

**Q: Sur la discussion demain avec les Chef d'Etats et sur le rôle d'Assad**

Je pense que la discussion que nous avons eue avec les Ministres des Affaires Etrangères lundi est une très bonne base pour la discussion au Conseil européen qui aura lieu demain. J'emmènerai au Conseil les résultats, les conclusions, que nous avons adoptées lundi à Luxembourg avec les Ministres des Affaires Etrangères, sur la Syrie notamment, mais aussi sur la Libye et sur le côté extérieur de notre stratégie sur les réfugiés et la migration. Je parlerai également aujourd'hui avec le Président Donald Tusk pour préparer le Conseil européen de demain. Je pense que nous sommes tous d'accord sur le fait qu'il est impossible d'imaginer que Bashar Al-Assad fasse partie de la future gouvernance du pays après quatre ans et demi de guerre civile. D'un autre côté, il faut démarrer une transition politique avec tout le monde de représenté autour de la table des négociations. C'est le travail que nous sommes en train de faire, notamment dans le cadre du processus mené par l'envoyé spécial des Nations Unis Staffan de Mistura.

**Q: Why does the EU legitimize dictatorial regimes like Eritrea by cooperating with them?**

We never legitimise any dictatorial regime, we are always putting human rights and our standards and our principles on the table first. We need to tackle the root causes, we always say. Among the root causes there is also respect of human rights, participatory democracy and societies that are inclusive. This is always on the table whenever we engage with leaderships wherever in the World.

Thank you!

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