

**Remarks by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini
following the Informal Meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs
(Gymnich)**

06/03/2015

I would like to thank Foreign Minister Edgars Rinkēvičs very much for the excellent cooperation in the preparation of this informal meeting and all throughout the Latvian Presidency and for the months still to come which are a long way, especially in view of the Riga summit that we will discuss tomorrow as well.

As Edgars said, the discussions we had today with the Ministers - in an informal setting, so no formal decision was to be taken - are preparing the ground for formal decisions in the next Foreign Affairs Council on 16 March and then at the European Council that, as you know, will have on the agenda both Libya and the situation in Ukraine.

I would start from the situation in Ukraine. As it was said very well, today we focused mainly on the way in which the European Union can support the implementation of the Minsk agreements, starting from the strengthening of the OSCE mission. The discussions we had with the Secretary General of the OSCE were helpful, not only to assess the situation on the ground, but also to understand what is needed, which means what is lacking at the moment to make it really effective on the monitoring of the ceasefire and on the monitoring of the withdrawal of weapons. But also the main focus was on the other parts of the implementation of the Minsk agreements, starting from the reform process in Ukraine, being it reforms on the social and economic level, reforms on the political level, the decentralisation process, reform of the constitution, all the way to early local elections as the Minsk agreements foresee.

We also shared the need to continue our European Union exercise of trilateral talks with Russia and Ukraine both on energy issues and on the trade issues, in particular the implementation of the trade part of the Association Agreement. We also insisted on the fact that we need to have more effective humanitarian support and access to the West and also to the East of Ukraine and the EU will increase its efforts in this respect.

I could not stress our unity more than Edgars has just done. But we are all very much aware of the fact that this is part of our joint strength, be it when we adopt the sanctions, as it has been in the past and it could be in the future if the situation deteriorates, be it our unity on the support of Ukraine, be it also on the political dialogue and on the diplomatic process. We are united on any single action we do, vis à vis Russia, vis à vis the situation in Ukraine.

Let me now pass to Libya. It was a very important discussion I think, to prepare the discussion we will have in the Foreign Affairs Council in ten days. We started with the telephone call with Bernardino Leon, who called us from Rabat. He was just in the middle of the negotiations, so reporting the state of play of the talks, quite positive, quite encouraging, even if obviously the process will be still difficult and long.

But the very fact that the talks are taking place and are moving forward is definitely a very positive sign that was not a given, and was not taken for granted, over the last months.

The European Union is already investing a lot in this process. We are providing financial support to the dialogue that is taking place in Rabat and is a UN-led exercise.

e will be hosting on 9 March a meeting of Libyan businessmen in Brussels to make sure that the business community from different sides, different parts of Libya comes together and is able also to express support to the political process, and concerns about the deterioration of the security situation in the country. We need to build the confidence inside the country, starting also from the civil society actors and we know that businessmen and businesswomen are a relevant part of it.

We will also have in Brussels a meeting of Libyan municipalities as soon as possible, as soon as the dialogue continues over the next days. We will agree with the UN when the right time to intervene is, but we are already planning a meeting of the municipalities to accompany the process of political dialogue that is now in place in Rabat on the local community level.

As well as, as Edgars said, we have started discussing possible European Union contributions, agreed with the UN, with the Arab interlocutors, with other regional actors.

The EU contributions would support any possible agreement coming out from the dialogue that is currently under way. All possible support, all possible forms of support, including also missions or operations could be explored in the coming days.

I have always said, if the political process starts, if the political process brings to some starting point inside Libya, the international community and the European Union, first of all, will be ready to support with all possible means.

So, we started discussing today with the Ministers different options that will come back to the table in ten days for first decisions or further evaluation, depending on where we stand with the process of dialogue.

Thank you.