



## Remarks by the High Representative/Vice President Federica Mogherini at the joint press conference with Ioannis Kassoulides, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cyprus

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Remarks/speeches

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Nicosia, 28 October 2016

*Check against delivery!*

Thank you. It is for me not only a pleasure but I would say also a must to be here in this moment that we understand perfectly well is a crucial moment for negotiations and it is only natural for us, together with Christos [Stylianides, Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management], to be here as the European Union and with our personal support for this important phase of the negotiations.

You referred to the fact that I visited already Cyprus; clearly a lot has been achieved since my last visit. Actually we see that more progress has been achieved in the last months than ever before on negotiations and we are here not only to exchange informations and views, being briefed and I am thankful to Ioannis [Kassoulides, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cyprus], to the President [Nicos Anastasiades] for the insights in the negotiation, also to Espen Eide [UN Secretary General's Special Adviser on Cyprus] whom I met and with whom I am constantly in contact, I would like to thank him personally and the UN's facilitating role.

But most of all, it has been an occasion to discuss the EU's support - and our personal support, but we are not only individuals, we are representing institutions: How can the European Union accompany in an even more effective way this process as this process enters its crucial phase? This is a process that is led with the strong ownership of courageous leaders who are showing determination, a vision and a lot of attention to the people of Cyprus' future. Our role as European Union is to accompany the leaders and their determination in a way that can be beneficial for all Cypriots to live in a united, European Cyprus.

So we discussed ways in which the European Union can better accompany these steps. Personally, we stand fully behind their efforts, their talks towards a settlement under the UN's auspices and we share the leaders' assessment that it would be feasible to overcome the remaining challenges that we know exist, very much encouraged by their determination to continue and intensify talks as the beginning of November in Switzerland; overcome these challenges and reach an agreement on a comprehensive settlement even by the end of this year. So the European Union, myself, us

personally, are fully supporting, fully encouraging, fully accompanying this process with all our determination and with all the instruments and tools that the European Union can put at the disposal of the Cypriots, all of them.

Finally, let me stress it once again, this would be not only a turning point and a historic page for the island, this would be as the minister [Ioannis Kasoulides, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cyprus] rightly pointed it out an extremely important step for the entire region. This is a particularly difficult region that needs hope and trust in diplomacy and in political solutions as no other region in the world needs - and this is a direct interest of all Europeans and all our friends in this region, that is a European region, being in the centre of the Mediterranean Sea -; that diplomacy and determination and investment in political solutions can lead to positive news for the people. This would be a game changer not only for all Cypriots, not only the island, also for the European Union, but also obviously for the entire South East Mediterranean and for the entire Middle East. It is a regional but even global responsibility to try and do this last mile in the most positive way.

Thank you.

**Q.** On the crucial issue of security after the settlement. Can you please elaborate on the EU position on this issue? If you could tell us in which concrete and effective ways can the EU safeguard security in Cyprus after a settlement and address the concerns raised by mostly the Turkish Cypriots with regards to this issue. Will the EU be present in case of a multilateral conference?

**A.** First, the issue of security and guarantees, something we discussed today, is still, as you know very well, an issue for the parties to discuss during the negotiations so I will not elaborate publicly on this, also because as I stressed before it is extremely important that the negotiations see the leaders taking decisions and finding solutions that can benefit the entire island. Obviously the best guarantee for security in any country in the world is a well-functioning state and particularly for any Member State of the European Union is being a Member State of the European Union itself. I will stop here for the moment as, as you understand well, we are entering a last crucial phase of negotiations and I would never publicly comment on issues that are subject to negotiations by the parties.

**Q.** On the possible terrorist threats emerging from the Middle East with ISIS being pushed outside Mosul and possible terrorists coming to Europe – what is the EU doing to prevent that ?

**A.** First of all, let me say that it would be quite short sided and even cynical to consider what is happening in Mosul, the liberation of areas both in Iraq but also in Syria that are seeing a strong Da'esh presence only through the lenses of the movement of terrorist fighters, in some cases, foreign terrorist fighters towards Europe. I do not think that a solution would be to keep them all where they are. Obviously, we all agree on the fact that the territories both in Iraq and Syria need to be first and foremost liberated from the presence of Dae'sh. So this is a security interest for the European Union and for the European Union's citizens.

Having said that, it is not directly linked to our portfolio on the external side but on the internal side of the European Union's work as you know there have been measures to strengthen the control of the movements of people at our external borders, in particular on the control of the identity and, in general terms, in the last months and years, we have increased the work we do on two issues that are fundamental. One is the issue of financing of Da'esh and terrorist activities in general and the second one is obviously the control of foreign terrorist fighters; not only on their way back to Europe but also on their way to Syria and Iraq. So this is the work that our colleagues who are dealing with internal security are intensifying a lot in the last months and this would

obviously concern also potential movements from that part of the region as well as it concerns also internal threats because as you have noticed most of the attacks that the European Union's territory has experienced in the last year are actually coming from within.

So, the work has intensified on all fronts. In this respect, it is mainly an internal work, what we are doing together and I would like to thank Christos for an excellent work we are doing together, working on the liberated areas, Mosul will be obviously a priority for us, to make sure that people can return to their houses and in their communities as soon as possible in the most secure way. This is itself part of the stabilisation and the prevention of further threats of terrorist activities, investing in people's lives and wellbeing and this is the work for which I would like to commend Commissioner Stylianides for an excellent work he is doing.

**Q.** On CETA. Would the EU agree to a summit in Ottawa after the summit in Brussels failed today?

**A.** I don't comment on that. It is so important what is happening here. I am ready to answer always to questions, but indeed I would like you to focus on the historical relevance of what we are discussing here today and of what is happening in this part of the European Union. So I will not comment on that in this moment even if we were in Brussels, but especially here because I think it is only fair to Cyprus and the leaderships here to focus our message today on all our support to this last very important phase of the talks.

Link to the video: <http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/video/player.cfm?ref=I128451>

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Author

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