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Statement by President von der Leyen after the special College meeting on 8 January 2020

Brussels, 8 January 2020

Good morning to you all,

This morning the College met to discuss the situation stemming from the tensions in Iraq, Iran, the wider Middle East as well as Libya.

And while we are standing here, we are still following the developments.

I would like to express my deepest condolences to all who lost their beloved ones in the crash of the Ukrainian aircraft this morning. At this moment, it is for the aviation security experts to investigate the cause of the crash, providing answers to this horrible tragedy.

The current crisis deeply affects not only the region but all of us. And the use of weapons must stop now to give space to dialogue.

We are called upon to do everything possible to rekindle talks. There cannot be enough of that.

The European Union in its own way has a lot to offer.

We have established and time tested relations with many actors in the region and beyond to de-escalate the situation.

I asked High Representative and the Commission Vice-President Josep Borrell today in College to debrief on the developments and on his contacts as well as actions undertaken so far. He will provide you with more details.

In the medium term, as coordinator of JCPOA, Josep Borrell, you will spare no efforts to reach out to all participants to safeguard the Iranian nuclear deal.

And moreover, the College also analysed potential consequences of the current crisis on the European Union.

For example in the areas of transport, energy, or neighbourhood and migration, but also the economic development, the stabilisation and the reconstruction the European Union is doing in these areas. The European Union is dedicated there and very much engaged in these areas and therefore its voice is heard.

We have looked comprehensively at the internal and external dimension of this issue to ensure that we act as effectively as possible.

As you know, I am now on my way to London, I shall meet Prime Minister Boris Johnson this afternoon. And of course the situation in Iran and Iraq will also be a topic.

It is in our mutual interest to build a new partnership between the European Union and the United Kingdom, one that will be enabling us to defend and strengthen our interests, both from an economic and a security point of view.

And I would like to hand over the floor now to the HR/VP.

SPEECH/20/5

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