

Remarks by the High Representative/Vice-President Federica Moghe

Check against delivery!

I first of all apologise for the delay.

We had a very long, substantial and good meeting with Foreign Minister [Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman] Al-Thani of Qatar. Just before the meeting took place I had the second phone call in 24 hours with the Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia [Adel bin Ahmed] Al-Jubeir and yesterday I spoke at length with the Foreign Minister of Kuwait [Sabah Al-Khalid] al-Sabah.

The European Union is talking to all sides directly involved in the ongoing tensions and crisis across the Gulf and around the Gulf, in particular within the GCC [*Gulf Cooperation Council*], with two simple messages: one, avoid any further escalation; and, second, engage in a political dialogue, in particular taking advantage of the mediation efforts that Kuwait is putting in place. These are the two clear, straight forwarding messages that we are passing to our friends in the region.

The European Union has good relations with all countries of the GCC. All countries of the region are good friends for us. We want to keep these good relations with all countries in the Gulf and we will keep good relations with all countries in the Gulf. We also believe that regional cooperation in the Gulf and around the Gulf is key for different reasons. First of all, to have an effective work on counter-terrorism, including on fighting terrorism financing; we believe that regional cooperation in the Gulf is key for our security and for the stability of the region and we believe it is also key for economy and trade. Not only is the region very much interconnected, through people, businesses, trade, security, but people, communities are also interlinked around the Gulf and we believe that restoring a good level of regional cooperation in the Gulf is key for the benefit of all citizens of the Gulf, of all people in the Gulf.

We also have a direct European Union interest. First of all because this risks to affect the work we do together on the security. We are together in the coalition against Da'esh, we are together in our efforts to find a way out of the crisis in Syria and we need our partners to come together again. We also have direct European interest in terms of economic investments and trade relations.

And, in general terms, I would like to say that the region has to understand, the Gulf has to understand on all sides that what happens there is relevant for many parts of the world. Again, in terms of security, in terms of stability, in terms of economy, but also in terms of religions. We see a

clear risk of the situation escalating further and spreading in an unpleasant and dangerous manner beyond the region of the Gulf, be it in Africa, or in South East Asia or in the Middle East.

Contacts directly with the parties involved will continue in the coming days, always with one purpose – that of supporting the work that Kuwait is doing. We do not want to multiply mediation efforts. For us is clear: there is one mediation effort in place, that is the one that has already succeeded during a similar but less dramatic crisis in 2014. We believe that the Kuwaiti efforts can be successful. We fully support their work and we have put the European Union's help and support at their disposal to accompany it in the best possible manner.

We will also continue to discuss about this, passing the same messages to other actors who are not directly involved but are taking the situation very seriously, in the region and beyond.

Q. Madame Mogherini, you already referred to the mediation by Kuwait: are you yourself planning to visit the region to support these mediation efforts?

If needed, obviously I would be ready to do it. I agreed with Foreign Minister Al Sabah [of Kuwait] that we will stay in close coordination in these days. I offered all the support that the European Union and me personally can give to the work that Kuwait is doing. So if a visit can be considered useful, first of all by our Kuwaiti friends, I would be ready to do it, anytime. I believe that this will also be one of the topics we will discuss, probably – not my visit, but the situation in the Gulf and the way in which the European can support even more the mediation efforts by Kuwait- also with the Foreign Ministers of the 28 Member States when we will have the Foreign Affairs Council in ten days from now.

Q. Quel était votre message plus particulier au Ministre des Affaires étrangères du Qatar [Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani]? Allez-vous discuter de cela au Conseil des Affaires étrangères [du 19 juin]?

Nous allons débattre le 19 juin au Conseil des Affaires étrangères de l'Union européenne sur la situation; je vais sûrement partager avec les Ministres le travail que nous sommes en train de faire. Nous avons encore 10 jours ; j'espère que d'ici au 19 juin nous allons avoir des évolutions positives plutôt que négatives. L'idéal serait de ne pas devoir aborder la question le 19 juin, *Inch'allah*, mais cela ne dépend pas de nous.

Ce qui est important de notre côté c'est de garder des liens très étroits et des conversations presque quotidiennes, soit avec le Ministre [des Affaires étrangères] du Qatar [Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani], soit avec le Ministre [des Affaires étrangères] du Royaume d'Arabie saoudite [Adel Al Jubeir] et comme je l'ai dit le Ministre des Affaires étrangères du Koweït pour soutenir les efforts de dialogue.

Il peut y avoir des visions différentes; nous aussi nous avons des visions différentes parfois avec chacun des interlocuteurs dans le Golfe, mais la façon de régler les différences ou même des positions parfois

irréconciliables est toujours -nous pensons- à travers le dialogue et il y a toujours la possibilité de trouver une base commune de travail.

Je le répète encore: la priorité pour nous est la lutte contre le terrorisme, la solution à la crise régionale et le maintien de bonnes relations que ce soit pour assurer la stabilité de la région, soit pour maintenir les investissements économiques et commerciaux. Et pour cela, non seulement les citoyens du Golfe, mais aussi l'Europe et le reste du monde ont besoin d'un niveau de coopération et de respect entre les pays du Golfe au sein du GCC.

Statement by the Spokesperson on Al Shabaab's terror attack in S

The EU extends its condolences to the families and friends of all those who lost loved ones and wishes a speedy recovery to the injured.

These terrorist acts shall not deter the path to peace and security in Somalia.

The European Union stands closely with the Somali federal and regional governments and security forces in their efforts to defeat terrorist activities.

Concentrations: la Commission ouvre une enquête approfondie sur le projet d'acquisition de NXP par Qualcomm

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Security Union: European Commission welcomes the Council's commitment to improve information exchange and border management

Following the adoption by the Justice and Home Affairs Council of the conclusions on information systems and interoperability and the general approach on the Commission's proposal for a European Travel and Information Authorisation System (ETIAS), Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris **Avramopoulos** and Commissioner for the Security Union Julian **King** made the following joint statement:

"The recent tragic attacks in Europe have reminded us, once again, that all Member States need to work together to protect our citizens from the threat of terrorism. Effective information sharing is a key element of our efforts to prevent terrorism and the Commission has been working relentlessly over the past two years to improve information management for borders and security, make more effective use of EU-level systems and close information gaps.

We need to ensure that our border guards and police, our immigration officers, our customs and judicial authorities have the necessary information at their disposal to protect our external borders, lead the fight against terrorism and organised crime and better protect our citizens. Ensuring that

persons can only be registered under one identity in our information systems for security, border and migration management is essential for this.

The conclusions adopted yesterday by the Council on the way forward to improve this information exchange and ensure interoperability of EU information systems prove that this is a shared priority at the highest political level. The Commission, together with the Council, the European Parliament, EU Agencies and the European Data Protection Supervisor will continue to drive this work forward with a view to increasing interoperability of the EU's information systems at every step of the way, in full respect of fundamental rights.

An important building block in this way forward is the European Travel and Information Authorisation System (ETIAS), and we welcome the Council's adoption today of a general approach. ETIAS will allow us to gather advance information on persons travelling visa-free to the EU and to ensure that those who may pose a security risk are identified before they reach our borders. We call on the Council and the Parliament to work constructively in order to swiftly adopt the legislation and to make ETIAS operational as soon as possible."

Next steps

The Commission will continue discussing the new approach to data management for security and borders with the European Parliament and the Council with the aim of reaching a common understanding on the way forward before the end of 2017. The discussion will feed into the proposal on interoperability which the Commission will present shortly. The preparation of the legislative proposal will include a public consultation and an impact assessment, including on fundamental rights.

As regards ETIAS, the Council and the European Parliament should start negotiations as quickly as possible to reach an agreement before the end of 2017 and ensure it is operational by 2020.

Background

President Juncker's [State of the Union](#) address in September 2016 and the European Council conclusions of [December 2016](#) highlighted the importance of overcoming the current shortcomings in data management and of improving the interoperability of existing information systems. In his State of the Union speech, President Juncker also announced that the Commission would propose in [November 2016](#) a European Travel Information System (ETIAS) – an automated system to determine who will be allowed to travel to the Schengen Area. The setting up of this system was further prioritised in the [Bratislava Roadmap](#) signed and agreed by the EU 27 leaders.

In [April 2016](#) the Commission presented a Communication on stronger and smarter information systems for borders and security, initiating a discussion on how information systems in the European Union can better enhance border management and internal security. In June 2016, the Commission set up a High-Level Expert Group on Information Systems and Interoperability to take this

work forward and to address the legal, technical and operational challenges to achieve interoperability. The High-Level Expert Group held its last meeting on 25 April 2017 and presented its [final report](#) on 11 May 2017.

The [seventh report](#) on progress made towards an effective and genuine Security Union welcomed the High-Level Expert Group's report and recommendations. Based on these, the progress report proposed the way forward to address structural shortcomings under the three main areas: maximising the utility of existing information systems; where necessary, developing complementary systems to close information gaps; and ensuring interoperability between our systems.

For More Information

[Press Release](#) on Commission sets out new approach on interoperability of information systems

[Press Release](#) on Commission proposes a European Travel Information and Authorisation System

[Communication](#) on 7th Progress Report on Security Union

Fusionen: Kommission leitet eingehende Untersuchung des vorgeschlagenen Erwerbs von NXP durch Qualcomm ein

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