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## R E M A R K S

### **by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton following the Foreign Affairs Council, Luxembourg, 20 October 2014**

*"The Council recognised that Ebola represents an unprecedented crisis which requires an unprecedented response.*

*We have already seen the pledging from the EU and its Member States of over €500m in assistance to the fight against Ebola, and recognise the need to make an increased effort, in close cooperation with the United Nations. We welcome to the efforts of those Member States playing a leading role in this struggle.*

*It is of course necessary to get additional health workers on the ground as soon as possible, as well as the necessary money and equipment, if we are to contain the spread of the disease and bring it under control.*

*So we are providing a guarantee that international health workers who volunteer will be provided with appropriate care, locally or through Medevac, within available resources, should they become infected.*

*We want to pay tribute to the heroic efforts of those already there, including through NGOs like Médecins Sans Frontières.*

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*We know that a good coordination between everyone involved is essential, so we are preparing terms of reference for a possible EU Coordinator who can ensure the most effective engagement between the European Union, Member States and the United Nations.*

*I was very pleased to welcome UN Special Representative on Libya Bernardino Leon, a good friend and colleague, who briefed us on the latest situation. It is a situation we find extremely worrying.*

*The crisis is not only tragic for the Libyan people but of course it presents real challenges for Europe. The coming weeks will be critical. If the current situation persists and becomes the norm, the chances for reconciliation will diminish.*

*Libyans need to understand very clearly that they cannot afford conflict. We call on all the stakeholders to make sure that they stop the fighting and support the political dialogue.*

*We very much appreciate the mediation role of UNSMIL and Bernardino León. We are exploring ways to assist UNSMIL with the Confidence Building Measures agreed in Gadhames on 29 Sept. We are also working on a Political Framework for a Crisis Approach - which will be the basis for decisions on EU engagement. We believe the Libyan people deserve to see a return to a peaceful political transition. And we want to do all we can to assist them.*

*We remain extremely concerned about the security and humanitarian situation in Iraq and Syria. And we all agreed on the fact that the actions of ISIL are totally unacceptable and we need to do all we can to contribute to the international efforts to defeat such terrorist groups.*

*The conclusions we adopted today give a comprehensive picture of the position that we have agreed upon. Ministers today endorsed as well the EU's counter-terrorism/foreign fighters strategy for Syria and Iraq.*

*And we discussed the situation in Ukraine, reaffirming our call for full and swift implementation of the Minsk Protocol and Minsk Memorandum. Despite some progress, more needs to be done as this whole process remains very fragile.*

*We also reconfirmed our commitment to support Ukraine, including through humanitarian aid to the affected population (63 million euros so far), by working together for economic and political reforms, sending an Advisory Mission for Security Sector Reform and by working towards an energy agreement between Ukraine and Russia. The two sides will meet tomorrow in the presence of Commissioner Oettinger as you know.*

*And then finally we had an exchange of views regarding the latest developments in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including the August ceasefire and the Cairo donors conference for Gaza last week, which I attended on behalf of the EU and which as you know raised 5.4 billion dollars.*

*These events highlighted an urgent need to move towards the negotiated solution to the crisis based on the two-state solution. Quartet envoys to be hosted by Helga Schmid, our*

*political director and Deputy Secretary-General, will meet in Brussels on 24 October to also consider this issue.*

*Thank you."*

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