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Mogherini chairs EU defence ministers' meeting, and visits Operation Sophia flagship



High Representative Federica Mogherini today chairs an informal meeting of Defence Ministers of the 28 European Union Member States in Malta, where she also welcomed NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and the Head of UN Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix for the first part of discussions.

Together they reviewed the operational engagement in the Mediterranean and Libya, within the wider context but also migration related challenges.

Following that, the EU ministers opened a discussion on progress regarding Permanent Structured Cooperation in European defence, the use of EU battle groups for crisis response and the proposed European Defence Fund.

The meeting will be “not only stocktaking but also a strong push to develop this European defence chapter about cooperation and integration that was indicated also in Rome when we celebrated the 60th anniversary of the Treaties as one of the main fields where the European Union will move on in the next years”, Mogherini told the press before the meeting.

“I am very confident that the chapter of the European defence will continue to move forward, in a very concrete, constructive and united manner ... I see this as a clear priority for all. If you ask the European citizens, the European citizens clearly indicate the field of foreign policy, security and defence as the field where the European Union added value is absolutely not in discussion. They want to see more European Union in the field of foreign policy, security and defence – and this is what we are doing,” the High Representative said.

On the eve of the meeting, Mogherini and the ministers visited the ITS San Giusto, the flagship of EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia, the EU operation to disrupt the business model of human traffickers at sea, which is also providing training to Libyan coast guards.

“Here you have the European flag, here you have 25 of the 28 Member States represented and working in one operation – as it is the case for all the other 15 operations and missions the European Union has around the world. This means the European Union is more and more also an actor in the security field and our partners around the world recognise this as an added value. In particular because we have a special way of dealing with security which mixes the hard power, but also the humanitarian angle, and the first priority we have, which is to human rights and protection of people.”

See also

Remarks upon arrival at the informal meeting of the EU Ministers of Defence

Video of arrival

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