

Foreign Affairs Council: Remarks by the High Representative/Vice



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Good morning,

At the Foreign Affairs Council today we have three main points for our discussion. As you can imagine, Belarus is very high on the agenda, but also Libya and our relationship with the African Union and with Africa in general.

On Belarus, I have to regret that the situation continues to deteriorate with ongoing repression against peaceful protesters, as everybody can see from the images on the television. I am very much impressed by those peaceful protests.

Today, we will discuss how to support the Belarusian population and how to review our relationship with the Belarus government according to the situation, where we do not recognise [Alexander] Lukashenko as the legitimate President of Belarus.

I am happy that we could meet with Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya [candidate in the August 9 Presidential elections] in the hours before the Council. The members [of the Foreign Affairs Council] had the opportunity to meet her and she gave us her account of the events in Belarus. We are really impressed by the courage and perseverance of the Belarusian people, especially Belarusian women, who show a real sense of leadership. Let me stress that we will support an inclusive national dialogue and the right of Belarusian people to free and fair elections.

This cannot be regarded as an interference in internal affairs. Because democracy and human rights are at the core of the European Union.

On Libya, after many months I see a reason for cautious optimism. There is a positive momentum, there is a ceasefire and we need to use it. We will talk about that, I will debrief the Council about my visit to Libya and my

outreach also to the Egyptian government regarding Libya, and how can we support the peace efforts.

There are some concrete decisions regarding our sanctions list but I will talk about it in our afternoon press conference.

We will talk about the relationship with Africa, you know that the Summit has been delayed due to the coronavirus effects but we will continue working and reaching out to our African partners to face the new challenges such as the fight against the pandemic and economic recovery.

And we have many current affairs, I will talk about Venezuela and debrief my colleagues about the International Contact Group meeting and my conversations during the summer both with the government and the opposition.

During the lunch, we will pay a lot of attention to our Southern Neighbourhood.

As you see there is a very busy and interesting agenda. We will talk about the results of the discussions in the Council later in the afternoon.

Thank you.

Link to the video: <https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/I-195261>