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EU Foreign Affairs Council

EU has to find effective strategies to tackle dangerous trouble spots in its neighbourhood

Outlining their expectations for the informal meeting of EU Foreign Affairs chiefs in Milan, the Greens/EFA spokespersons for foreign affairs, **Barbara Lochbihler** and **Tamás Meszerics**, said:

"EU foreign affairs ministers have to urgently develop effective and common strategies for a series of dangerous trouble spots in the EU's immediate and wider neighbourhood, instead of leaving external policy to 28 uncoordinated Member States.

The situation in Ukraine is worsening by the hour. President Putin continues his two-faced game by issuing half-hearted denials while Russian forces operate on Ukrainian territory, opening a potential new conflict in the south-eastern part of the country. The EU must insist that an effective control of Ukraine's eastern borders be put in place to enable a diplomatic solution to the crisis.

Likewise, there finally needs to be a coordinated and European response to the terrifying rise of the Islamic State/ISIS in and around Iraq. Simply allowing Member States to do what they deem appropriate, or waiting for Washington to react, is unacceptable – especially since unilateral military action has never adequately resolved a complex crisis. An informed and comprehensive strategy is needed, involving all relevant regional and religious actors. The situation in Iraq cannot be viewed separately from that in Syria, where the population continues to suffer, including at the hands of the IS forces.

The open-ended cease-fire reached in Gaza must be followed by concrete action, allowing the Palestinians to rebuild their lives and enjoy their basic right to live in dignity. Europe has its leverage in the region and should at last muster the political will to use it, in order to ensure the full lifting of the Gaza blockade as well as the launch of meaningful and bona fide peace talks.

Libya must be prevented from turning into a failed state, not only because it is in Europe's immediate neighbourhood. It is more urgent than ever for the EU to design a meaningful strategy on Libya, a country that remains shockingly neglected in Brussels.

150 years after its birth, international humanitarian law continues to be violated throughout Europe's neighbourhood. More than ever, the EU and its Member States should fight impunity for war crimes and crimes against humanity – be it in Syria, Gaza, Ukraine, Libya or elsewhere – and actively support international efforts towards accountability, as an integral and indispensable means to secure long-standing

peace."

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Responsible MEPs



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