



Foreign Affairs Council, 3230th meeting: extracts from the doorsteps

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On 11 March 2013, Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, chaired the 3230th meeting of the Foreign Affairs Council in Brussels. The EU Ministers discussed the EU relations with Russia, ahead of an exchange of views at the European Council on 14/15 March 2013. The Council also took stock of EU relations with Japan, in view of the upcoming EU/Japan summit. It also reviewed recent developments in Iraq. The Council debated events in the EU's southern neighborhood, focusing on Egypt, Libya and Tunisia. The EU Ministers also discussed the situation in Syria with Lakhdar Brahimi, Special Representative of the UN and the League of Arab States for Syria.

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TIME	DESCRIPTION	DURATION
10:00:00	Title	00:00:05
10:00:05	Arrival of Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and President of the Council, and soundbite (in ENGLISH): This morning's Foreign Affairs Council is going to focus on a number of key issues. First of all can I say how delighted I am to welcome Mr. Brahimi to the Foreign Affairs Council, an opportunity of course for us to continue to talk with him about the challenges facing the people of Syria and the devastating situation that we now find in that country. It will be an opportunity to review again and ensure that our humanitarian aid is able to reach people as quickly as possible and to talk about the political situation as he sees. I will take the opportunity to debrief on the E3+3 discussions with Iran and to explain the next steps where as you know we will be going back for another round of discussions in a couple of weeks' time. We are also going to have a bigger discussion on Russia, our relationships with Russia, that looks forward to the European Council where they too will be discussing it and I will be briefing them on what's being discussed here.	00:01:08
10:01:13	Soundbite by Didier Reynders, Belgian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, External Trade and European Affairs (in FRENCH) saying that they have been all trying to persuade their Russian and Chinese partners for some months now. Today they are going to see with Mr. Brahimi if it is possible to open a dialogue	00:00:19

	<p>... that that Brahimi it is possible to open a dialogue. Saying that he believes that the dialogue is possible between the opposition and maybe some members of the regime, but certainly not with those that have blood on their hands, he thinks it is not possible with President Assad.</p>	
10:01:33	<p>Arrival of Eamon Gilmore, Irish Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade and soundbite (in ENGLISH): Today we will be meeting with Mr Bahimi, for a discussion on the situation in Syria. There are essentially two elements to this discussion: this huge humanitarian crisis which the EU is contributing to help to resolve. We have to focus our attention now on how we get a resolution of the crisis in Syria. The EU supports the work of Mr. Brahimi. We are discussing with him how we can help him to take that work forward. How for example the Geneva process might be reactivated. How for example the role of Russia might be brought into the situation in a more constructive way (2 shots)</p>	00:00:51
10:02:25	<p>Soundbite by Jean Asselborn, Luxembourgish Minister for Foreign Affairs (in GERMAN) saying that they will discuss with Mr Bahimi on Syrian situation but they are not allowed to use a military forces, they have to use the diplomatic way. They have been trying for two years; He thinks it can still last months. There is no change but they have no mandate. So they have to keep trying in the diplomatic way.</p>	00:00:37
10:03:02	<p>Arrival of Linas Linkevičius, Lithuanian Minister for Foreign Affairs, and soundbite (in ENGLISH): We are looking forward to the meeting with Mr. Brahimi, we hope he will provide more ideas on how to solve the situation with political and diplomatic means, we should also address the issue of refugees inside and outside the country, it should be the role of the European Union.</p>	00:00:22
10:03:24	<p>Soundbite by Carl Bildt, Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs (in ENGLISH): I think the most important thing today is that we are going to listen to Lakhdar Brahimi, see which are the possibilities and prospects of a political solution and give that our maximum support. There has to be a political solution, there is no military solution in sight which leaves anything likely to be a stable Syria possible.</p>	00:00:24
10:03:48	<p>Soundbite by William Hague, British Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (in ENGLISH): As you know, it is a human catastrophe now in Syria, more than a million refugees, millions displaced and ten of thousands deaths. This should remain on top of agenda. It will be good for us to discuss with Mr. Brahimi, what is happening. I met him in London last week; we must continue to support his work</p>	00:00:25

10:04:14	<p>Soundbite by Guido Westerwelle, German Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs (in GERMAN) saying that Europe is a community of values and this has to be manifested also in the internal structure of the countries. This means that what is described in European constitutions as constitutional order, civil rights, human rights, separation of powers must also apply in practice. This is why he started an initiative with colleagues from other EU countries, they have addressed to the Commission, they are convinced they have to work in Europe so that the unity of European principles on values have to be established on the inside.</p>	00:00:51
10:05:05	<p>Soundbite by Michael Spindelegger, Austrian Federal Minister for European and International Affairs (in ENGLISH): I hope so but I don't believe that there is really new ground with Russia. We have not heard that the position is changing in Moscow, so we have to make a lot of pressure to Russia to change the position otherwise it won't bring peace in Syria.</p>	00:00:19