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OPENING STATEMENT

**by Federica Mogherini, Vice-President-designate of the
Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs
and Security Policy, at the hearing in the European Parliament**

"I will speak English and will apologise to my French-speaking friends as French takes too much time. English makes my challenge a little easier, as having 15 minutes to draw on plans for five years all over the world is particularly complicated and, for an Italian, basically impossible. So I am counting on very good questions to go into the details on many different aspects. I will start from us. We are living in very difficult times. All around us, if you look at Kobane, at the 3 600 victims in Ukraine, at approximately the same number of people that have died so far from Ebola, if you look south-east, if you look at Lampedusa – where I was just a couple of days ago – and if you look at global issues that seem far away but still affect our citizens' lives and our own future very much, I think the question we need to answer is the questions that our citizens ask us. In this difficult world, in these difficult times, what does the European Union do? Where do we stand? How do we make sure that we play our role in these difficult times?"

We have our tools. I would say that, after the Lisbon Treaty, we do have these. We do have an External Action Service in place. We need to spend the next five years shaping our common policy, our common vision and our common strategy. That is my first task for the next five years – to shape a real common policy. I know that sounds naive for some of us – maybe you too, I do not know. People say that Member States will obviously always have a foreign and security policy and some people say we do not need a 29th one, and I completely share that view. But, at the same time, all of us and all of the people out there know very well that there is no way of dealing with these difficult times and this difficult world if we do not exercise together our duties and our responsibilities. We need to think big and to do it

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together. We need a long-term vision to prevent crises and to manage post-crisis. We need to think big, with a far-reaching look at the global landscape, and we have to realise that this is in our own interest.

There is not one single internal priority of the European Union that is not linked to an external dimension. There are things that today cannot be done by any of our Member States alone. So that is why I think it is in our own interests to do what President Juncker mentioned in his speech in July in the Parliament – to make use to the full of the EU's potential externally. Now what do we need, in my view, to achieve this goal? Three things. First, I think we need ownership by all of us, in all Member States. We need to build our common vision together from the very beginning. It is too late when we get to a table to agree a text. It is too late when we get to react to a crisis that is already in place. We need to share a vision from the very beginning. That is why I will start my mandate in the first months by paying a visit to the 28 capitals - starting with the next Presidency, Latvia - meeting not only the government and not only the Foreign Ministers in the government, but also the parliament, and Members of the European Parliament, if you are available, NGOs, civil society organisations, think-tanks, academies and the foreign affairs community in each and every Member State to build a common vision and priorities for the European Union foreign and security policy – to start building it. The positive point is that we have five years to work together.

Second, we need to work together. I will be happy if, five years from now, there is no 'us' and 'them' when the European institutions refer to each other, and there is just 'us, the European Union' – that being the Commission, the EEAS, the Council and the European Parliament. I would like to work on connecting institutions, and I know I will have special responsibility in that as I have different hats – we can discuss how many there are. I know that a lot will depend on how I manage to give the highest political input for structures to work together because, and I am very clear on this, I cannot ask structures to work together if I do not work with all of them myself. That is why I have decided – and I have announced – that from the very first day of my appointment I will move, together with my Cabinet, to the Berlaymont Building. That does not mean that I will leave the EEAS. It means that I will work to make the EEAS the centre for all the external action of all European institutions, which is how it is supposed to be. This will also mean that I will go to College meetings. My Head of Cabinet will go to the 'Hebdo' to prepare the work. We will need to share our work.

Third, we need to coordinate all actions and all policies that have an external impact – with the external relations Commissioners but also with others because there is no single portfolio that potentially has no impact on our external policies and actions. I would mention here in particular energy, trade, migration, climate, the environment and all the others. We have agreed with President Juncker that I am going to coordinate and chair a group that is going to meet every month in different formats, depending on the agenda. The first meeting of this group will take place in the first week we are in office at the beginning of November, also because we need to coordinate internal and external policies more, and more efficiently. If we look at the major challenges to security, it is very clear that we need that coordination: think of terrorism, think of migration flows, think of security and defence. We need to work in different formats according to the agenda, content-wise. As I mentioned security and defence, let me also say that I count on my little – but still fair – experience as a Member of

Parliament in the Committee on Defence in the Italian Parliament and also with the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. I count on developing security and defence cooperation as it is settled as one of the four priorities of the strategic agenda that the European Council adopted in June, referring to Article 21 of the Treaties: 'preserve peace, prevent conflict, strengthen international security'. This would be the light for me.

In talking about security and defence, I know very well that this is also one of my hats, as Head of the European Defence Agency, and that I am going to do this in full, working with the European Union Institute for Security Studies, chairing the defence councils – not only the formal ones but also the informal ones – and visiting our missions and operations, both military and civilian. I know that I can count on the European Parliament, and on this committee in particular, to build on its experience and its visions to do this, which is a challenge. I know that it is not easy, but I think I can count on building a special relationship with you, not just because I need to fulfil an obligation and not just formally, but because it is my political interest – and I think it is also your political interest – to start a partnership and work together for the next five years. If we manage to do all of this, I think we will also manage to exercise our responsibilities, as I mentioned before.

That means, for me, that what I suggest to you first of all is taking care of our part of the world, which is the most complicated one at the moment: not only the neighbourhood but also the extended neighbourhood – the neighbours of our neighbours. Starting from the Balkans and Turkey, I believe that the enlargement policy is the best, if not only, guarantee for long-term transformation in terms of democracy, stability and economic development. The east. I think we will need greater EU attention in different forms to the east, starting with full support to Ukraine in terms of security, institutional reforms, political processes, economic challenges and energy challenges. We will need to support Moldova and Georgia, especially in the coming months. We will need to work with Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus on our way forward. We will need to face our Eastern neighbour – Russia – by, in the immediate term, trying to have full implementation of the Minsk Agreement – on all points – and supporting Poroshenko's efforts to have peace in the east of his country. Russia, as I said in this very room one month ago, might not be a partner at the moment, which is a picture of the situation today, but it is still a strategic country in the world and it is firstly a neighbour to Ukraine, so I guess we will need to deeply reassess together our relations with Russia in the next five years.

I said we would need greater attention to the east. I say at the same time we need greater attention to the south. In the Middle East, in particular, the EU has been an effective payer and needs to become an effective player. At the same time, we need to develop more and more a common framework for common action to stop ISIL, which is not a state and not Islam but a major global threat and a threat to all of us. We will need to pay major attention to Libya, which risks being the next in line, and there I see a big EU role to be played together with the UN and the neighbouring countries. But we need also to pay attention to the success stories and not make them become unsuccessful stories. Tunisia comes to mind, but also Morocco. We will need to work a lot with regard to the south, and to the southern neighbours of our southern neighbours, in Africa, which is not only a receiver of aid but a partner politically. Being an Italian, let me also mention the fact that we will have to pay

attention to the far north, to the Arctic, because now it can be quite quiet, but it is not to be taken for granted that it stays quiet in the years to come.

I said that we need to pay more attention to the east and to the south. This is not a contradiction from me. Crises do not wait in turn; they do not queue up and wait for us. We need to do all at the same time and we will need to do all at the same time altogether, otherwise it will not be effective. I know it is challenging, it is getting more and more challenging, but I am getting to the end. In this difficult situation in this difficult world in these difficult times we are facing, I think we can count on key partners that are for us not only friends but people we can work with in a very reliable way. I am thinking of the transatlantic partnership which is now, more than ever, strategic. Security-wise – and I am ready to work with the new Secretary-General of NATO, Jens Stoltenberg, who is also a very good friend of mine – as closely as possible. Economics-wise, I know that you have been discussing TTIP with Cecilia – and I guess it might be the case we come back to that during the questions, but let me say that trade is not only an economic instrument but also a strategic instrument – as well as global challenges.

Let me also mention Latin America amongst the key partners. Not only the two strategic partners we have there, but Latin America and the Caribbean as a whole, as potential strategic partners to the European Union. I see the EU-CELAC summit meeting in June as an opportunity to relaunch our partnership. There is huge potential there in political terms and in economic terms that is not to be taken for granted, and we need to have political investment there as a European Union. Talking about regionalism, which is clearly of value in Latin America, I come to Asia where we definitely need to work with our partners – China, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea – but we need to work on the regional groupings, working together also with countries that we do not see as key partners, but on which a little bit of our political investment could pay a lot.

Apart from that, I think we will need to work together with other organisations – regional and global – starting with the UN for sure. I mentioned NATO. Let me mention the regional ones that will be, and are, more close to us: the OSCE, the Council of Europe, the League of Arab States, UfM, the African Union. We have common work, just as we have a common agenda. This will be on climate change, which is part of our foreign policy, and has to be even more part of our foreign policy. It will be on human rights, where I think as Europeans we have a particular responsibility in developing a coherent agenda, including our internal policies, and let me mention three main domains and I know we can come back to these: media freedom, women and the freedom of religion.

Last but not least, and I shall close on this, there is the UN Post-2015 Development Agenda. I am ready and happy to work with Mr Mimica on that. As the European Union, we can play a major role in shaping an agenda that is valid not only on typical development issues, but also on the environment and on sustainability, and an agenda that is valid at the same time for external action and for internal action. Thank you very much. I am looking forward to your questions."