Strasbourg  
17/04/2018 - 12:16  
HR/VP speeches

Speech at the European Parliament plenary session on peace prospects for the Korean peninsula in the light of recent developments

Speech on behalf of High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini at the European Parliament plenary session on peace prospects for the Korean peninsula in the light of recent developments

Check against delivery!

Monika Panayotova, Deputy Minister for the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the EU 2018, on behalf of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission, Federica Mogherini.

The new developments in the Korean peninsula since the beginning of this year are encouraging. We were glad to know that the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) have agreed on a date for the inter-Korean Summit meeting on the southern side of the joint security area, namely 27th April, and are actively preparing for it.

The planned meeting between [the] President [of the United States of America, Donald] Trump and DPRK leader Kim Jong-un, is another historic opportunity to launch a process which may lead to denuclearisation and lasting peace on the Peninsula. We are looking forward to the outcomes of this summit and we are following the preparations closely. We firmly hope that they will foster trust and become building blocks for a process of negotiations leading to stability and development in both countries.

Trust is essential. History has taught us that peace-making can be a long and fragile process. Once trust is broken, it takes a long time and serious efforts to rebuild.

Many remain cautious about the prospects for peace on the Peninsula, despite recent encouraging signals. Indeed, North Korea must take concrete actions to address international concerns with regard to its nuclear and missile programmes. To begin with, we expect the DPRK to enter into a negotiation
on denuclearisation and refrain from further tests on nuclear weapons or re-launching missiles. A peaceful environment will be crucial to create the necessary conditions towards a negotiated solution.

The recent positive developments would have been impossible without the leadership and courage shown by President Moon and his government in reaching out towards the North. The European Union has always supported the leading role of the Republic of Korea in assuring the engagement of the DPRK in a meaningful dialogue, aimed at the complete verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation.

The Korean Foreign Minister, Ms Kang, took part in the Foreign Affairs Council on March 19 to discuss the state of play and the way forward. This meeting provided an opportunity to pledge the EU’s continuous support to the work of the Republic of Korea. We reiterated our position in favour of a peaceful resolution of the crisis, and we also confirmed that the strict monitoring of the DPRK’s commitment to de-nuclearisation will be necessary.

Our support to furthering the diplomatic process, combined with sustained pressure through sanctions was reaffirmed by the Secretary-General [Helga Schmid] of the European External Action Service at the end of March, on a visit to the Republic of Korea and Japan.

Clearly, through our policy of critical engagement, we have been maximising pressure on the DPRK. The EU has transposed all UN Security Council resolutions in a swift and timely manner. Additionally, the European Union has adopted autonomous measures against the DPRK.

We can safely confirm that the EU sanctions regime vis-à-vis DPRK is currently our most restrictive towards any country. We approached a significant number of countries in Africa, in Asia last autumn, and will do so again shortly to encourage them to fully and strictly implement all UN Security Council resolutions. This time we will also include an offer of concrete support for capacity-building on sanctions enforcements where needed.

It is of the utmost importance that the international community remains united and determined in its approach, and calls on the DPRK to completely abandon its nuclear and missile programmes. We would thus maintain the direct and indirect pressure on North Korea until it embarks on a credible path towards complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation.

Talks for talks' sake are not an option. This has to be a meaningful process towards peace. At the same time, pressure and sanctions are not an end in themselves. They are always an instrument to encourage a political process. The European Union is strongly convinced that lasting peace and the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula must be achieved through peaceful means.

This is why we have welcomed these new high-level initiatives which will give diplomacy a chance. And in parallel to our current strong focus on the critical track, we have always kept communication channels open. We also believe that the multilateral process will be necessary to address the DPRK nuclear issue in its entire complexity and achieve lasting peace and security on the Korean Peninsula.

Once agreed, consistent monitoring and verification of the de-nuclearisation by respective international bodies, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency, will be needed to ensure that the DPRK is strictly and fully implementing its commitments. The European Union will be ready to support these processes, in close consultations with key partners.

The European Union has a huge expertise on nuclear non-proliferation, particularly thanks to the talks with Iran. We are now willing to support the Korean peace process in any possible way. Once again, we are on the side of non-proliferation and we are on the side of peace.
Link to the video:

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