

- M. Preiss: No problem.
- F. Mogherini: But what an introduction.
- M. Preiss: Yeah. So I think the first question was already asked.
- F. Mogherini: Was it? They didn't notice.
- M. Preiss: How good does it work for the EU to have a high representative?
- F. Mogherini: It works. I wouldn't change one...
- M. Preiss: It sounded slightly different. Just...
- F. Mogherini: Ask any of the two if they become my successor in a few months. No, it works, jokes apart. I wouldn't change one single comma of the Lisbon treaty when it comes to my job. I give you one example, I think one of the best results we have achieved in this last three, four years is the work on the European Union Defense. Our founding fathers and mothers had tried that for 50, 60, 70 years. It never worked, and we managed to do this.
- F. Mogherini: I believe we managed to do this also because in the Lisbon treaty, you indicate that there's one person doing the high representative, the vice president of the commission, and the head of the European Defense Agency. And that is a lot of work. You don't sleep, you don't get a life anymore, but you can... If you want, and if you try to create the space and the conditions, you can try to come to a certain coherence between the efforts. Between the different policies.
- F. Mogherini: I've been a minister myself, so I would never put the question in terms of asking a minister to make space for someone else. But what you can do as a high representative is use the added value that the European Union brings to any national foreign minister, because no foreign minister in this world of today of one single country has the leverage that he or she has through the 28.
- F. Mogherini: So use the power. It's not asking to step back and create space. It's asking actually to make one step forward and act European. Then it makes sense for everybody, and actually it's convenient for everybody.
- M. Preiss: But do you feel sidelined every now and then by the other foreign affairs ministers?
- F. Mogherini: No. No, what worries me is what worries me is what Mira was saying at last. That now there is a tendency to see as a point of pride if you stop a decision. While before there were decisions that were stopped but there was a sense of responsibility, of belonging together. It is true that the wind has changed, not only in foreign policy. Actually, in foreign policy much less than in other issues.

Look at immigration, internal policies. They suffer much more of this trend than the foreign policy or the defense policy. On the defense issues, we voted at unanimity at 28 with the UK the last three years. Doesn't make the headlines, but what worries me is this... Is that the winds now, not only in Europe go in another direction. I play it alone. This risk to endanger not just the roll of the European Union foreign policy or the high representative, but the European Union itself. If you believe that it's smarter to go alone than together, first of all you don't realize how big China is [inaudible 00:03:23], but apart from that you lose your asset. You lose your real tools, you lose your leverage, and at the end of the day you give up one of your instruments.

M. Preiss: You mentioned the steps that were made in terms of military cooperation in Europe.

F. Mogherini: Yeah.

M. Preiss: Being a success compared to what it was achieved in the decade before, but still whatever [crosstalk 00:03:50] it can achieve in the end it will be far short perhaps of what it is needed in a military sphere to be really taken serious. Are we betting on the wrong horse trying to improve military cooperation instead of using economic power we really have... And we see how important it is, especially with Iran. Are we betting on the wrong horse in improving our military, which also alienates the U.S. Administration even more in this situation?

F. Mogherini: I think in the U.S., there's quite some understanding. Not a consensual understanding, but nothing seems to be consensual in the United States, so that's norm. But the fact that more European Union corporation on defense issues is actually helping in the burden trading exercise. The last...

M. Preiss: But you received the letter from the U.S. Saying if you go with your model of funding, then you can even face sanctions from the U.S. On that.

F. Mogherini: I was with the NATO defense ministers yesterday evening, and we had a conversation exactly on that again, and it was probably the 20th time we had that conversation. And I was telling them very clearly... And the member states that are also NATO allies which are 22 if I'm not wrong, was saying the same. As we started to work on the European Union Defense Cooperation, military budget, defense budgets of the EU member states have gone up, which didn't happen since years. Even if all previous U.S. Administrations were advocating for more budget sharing. What we're doing is in the European Union, not betting on military compared to civilian or economic power. Our strong power is a soft power. We know that well, we're going to continue to use it.

F. Mogherini: And even the military power, even the defense part of our work is always done in the European way. But giving up to the economy of scale of the European Union defense investments simply doesn't make sense in the world of today. If

you put the defense budgets of the EU member states altogether, it's the second largest in the world, and that's 90% in the NATO alliance. Do we want to give it up?

F. Mogherini: So, the point is not to decide how much member state can you invest on defense, this is a national choice. This is sovereignty, it's for national parliaments and governments to decide. But we have an economy of scale that currently on defense we're not using. So we simply said, instead of having a fragmentation, let's put things together and let's see if we can incentivize member states to work together also in the field of defense. And the first concrete result of this has been a project on military mobility that is a project that is useful for NATO. And that without the European Union... incentivizing the changes in the infrastructures, looking at the bureaucratic norms for transportation and things like that. That would not happen.

F. Mogherini: So a concrete project of corporation on defense of the European Union that is beneficial to NATO, with European Union money by the way, I think it makes perfectly sense. But this is not an alternative to investing more on European global rolling of the fields. You mentioned the economy, and I think that one of the key challenges for the years to come will be to use our economic tools, our economic sovereignty starting from the euro in the global landscape a bit more than we've done so far.

F. Mogherini: This would not be in the competences of the high representative, not now nor later. But it...

M. Preiss: Should it be?

F. Mogherini: No. Not necessarily. No, because we have established in this five years a good practice. Something I would strongly suggest is continued for the next five years. We have established this group of commissioners that is regularly every month is gathered under my coordination. One hour meeting, all commissioners that have a portfolio that relates to the topics on the agenda come. So not only the external ones, but we can have climate, we have have culture, we can have science and technology, we can have... you can have whatever. And depending on the agenda, being it China, being it the agreement with Mercosur, being it the Sahel, you name it. We give a certain coherence to the work of the commission in relation to the work of the Council of Foreign Affairs. And that I think works finally... starts to work finally well. And this could include for instance increasing the work that the commission and the economic commissioners... The economic vice presidents do, in the EU's, for instance of the currency, for global purposes.

M. Preiss: It sounds to me to make Europe more efficient, but not making it a global super power. So even if we go to the end of all those developments, I... Do you think it will [crosstalk 00:08:47] really change the position of the EU?

F. Mogherini: Yeah, I think it would. I think it has changed already. When I started, I remember very well that the question I was asked the most was how to make Europe relevant. How do you bring the European Union in at the table as a relevant player? And again, the Polish minister made a... He actually made a relevant point. When I started I was quite frustrated coming in and finding a format that didn't include the European Union at the table. At the end of the day I have to say it worked quite well in terms of coordination, because the two member states that are sitting at that table have always shared information, and we've always coordinated even during the meetings of the Normandy format. And it can even help us play in different roles inside and outside.

F. Mogherini: But apart from that, the point at that time... 2014, 2015, was how to make the European Union relevant as a player. Today, you go from Japan to Chile to New Zealand to the Arctic, go to Canada, you don't... You're not asked if the European Union is relevant. You're asked whether the European Union is focused enough on its global responsibilities, and it's not starting to be inward-looking. So the global player role is recognized by our partners. I'm not 100% sure it's recognized by Europeans, and I think this might be part of the problem.

M. Preiss: But let's have a look into that on a very concrete situation. We are having a situation where I think from a European perspective, the Americans are playing with war in Iran. So we saw what happened after the invasion of Iraq, up until the refugee crisis, with all the consequent developments. We are having NATO training mission in Iraq, we have NATO force in Afghanistan, so both...

F. Mogherini: We also have a European Union mission in Iraq. You knew it?

M. Preiss: We have Turkey sharing a border with Iran, and still no really coordination, no common approach to Iran. Can we talk about the transatlantic alliance there? It's something that's so fundamental for Europe.

F. Mogherini: We have... It's so fundamental for the rest of the world, as well. I think there's almost no single country or no single continent for which it is not relevant what happens around Iran. Also because of the geography. Iran is always considered as a Middle Eastern player, but it's a player in Afghanistan... Potentially a player in Afghanistan, Central Asia, Asia, the oceans...

M. Preiss: But we have no say in that.

F. Mogherini: We have no say? Oh, [inaudible 00:11:34]. We only talk about that almost. No, that's not true. We talk about everything, but the European Union first of all has a policy on Iran, and has kept... has built and has kept a policy on Iran in unity, in full unity, until now. And I'm convinced it will continue, and we have some level of these agreements on some issues with Washington. The approach to the nuclear deal has become an issue of this agreement with Washington after Washington decided... After this U.S. Administration decided to stop implementing the agreement, that I want to remind us all is a UN Security

Council resolution. It's not an agreement, actually. But we have kept our line together with the rest of the international community apart from a couple of countries. We have done probably the most difficult, and also the most decisive steps to try and keep the deal alive.

F. Mogherini: And as of today, more than one year after the U.S. Left the implementation of the agreement, Iran today is still compliant with the agreement. You asked me one year ago if I believed it was possible. I would have told you... Well, publicly I would have told you for sure, but I think quite a miracle that this has happened, and this has happened because of the European Union. Not only of the European Union, this has also happened because I believe the rest of the international community has helped us all to keep in place a multi-national agreement that has proven to be successful so far. It's not perfect. Nothing in life is perfect, and doesn't cover essential elements that we would like to cover. But it was never meant to cover non-nuclear issues.

F. Mogherini: So, on the policy on Iran, there are issues on which the United States... We are discussing on everything. On some issues we disagree. For instance, we believe that keeping the GCPI in place is the basis for building on further discussions and further possible agreements. What worries us the most is the perspective of an escalation. I think that everybody in Europe, but also everybody in the region and for sure in our neighboring continents, those that are close enough to be worried for the perspective on military escalation, are telling our American friends the same. And obviously are telling Tehran first and foremost the same. A military escalation, a military option in that area would be a disaster, not only for the region but for the world.

M. Preiss: Do you think...

F. Mogherini: And I'm sure that in Washington, many think the same.

M. Preiss: Do you think we are going to get back to the good old times with the better transatlantic relationship, or do you think as German Chancellor Angela Merkel said, "The times where we could really rely on each other are more or less over,"?

F. Mogherini: For me this is a difficult question because I don't know if this comes in the job description of the German Marshall Fund Fellow, but I'm so much and deeply...

M. Preiss: I always experience a lively debate, so...

F. Mogherini: I'm so much in love with the country, and for sure a lot of that depends on the month I spend in strange places within the United States that gave me an insight of what America is. I'm so much in love with the country that I cannot imagine of good times and bad times, because there are and there can be political disagreements. But we have political disagreements inside the European Union

as well. You might have political disagreements inside a coalition government in one country, or inside one party. That's democracy, that's life. That's okay.

F. Mogherini: And we have had difficult moments in the past. You mentioned the Iraq war. Those were difficult times for the transatlantic relations, and that was a split inside the European Union as well. So, I wouldn't define the good old times and the challenge and the difficult times now and what comes next. I think we entered into hopefully what can be defined a mature friendship, partnership where we can accept that we have political disagreements on some issues, and that this doesn't put into question the fact that we're friends, partners. That we are on the same side of history and of the world.

F. Mogherini: And if you look at the list of things on which we work closely together, the number of issues on which cooperation continues to be perfectly working and vital, are many more than the ones that are not working. We have two or three issues where we clearly disagree. The Iran Nuclear Deal, the status of Jerusalem, multilateralism and climate change. And trade. Five. So what?

M. Preiss: And Huawei is still to come. And trade is also still to come.

F. Mogherini: Huawei is not for me. Huawei is for member states, at least some. But mentioning... China is clearly one of the issues on which it would be only natural for us to work together because we have the same concerns. But apart from that...

M. Preiss: But what does it mean to work together on that?

F. Mogherini: But apart from that, if I can mention you 10, 20, 30 issues on which our daily work continues, and even sometimes it's even better than before. On the Balkans, on Afghanistan, on the PRK, on some regions in Africa, on Ukraine, on Syria. We continue to work very closely together. So, I'm not saying that the points of this agreement irrelevant. In some cases for us Europeans is the DNA, support the multilateralists, support the UN system for us is the DNA. Is how you conceive the word. We go multilateral, we go cooperative. The zero sum game doesn't belong to our thinking, so we try to build those boring exercises where everybody finds its own benefit in finding an agreement, because we are born out of that kind of experience.

F. Mogherini: Germany and France started to come together when they defined that it was convenient to be on the same side and make business rather than make war. That's very pragmatic. This is why Europe was started as a project. We are a multilateral experiment and we're probably the most successful one in history. So, that is clearly in our DNA, but you take Iran on the nuclear deal, or on the opportunity of having or possibility of having a military escalation, we're definitely on another page. But when it comes to Syria, with the United States we're perfectly on the same side, and we have the same concerns on the role on Tehran in Damascus.

F. Mogherini: So, it's not black and white. It's complicated. The world is complicated, life is complicated. The good point is that in this I believe there's an opportunity for the Europeans, and maybe also for the Americans, to understand that there is a certain level of responsibility on our side. That we can exercise a role, and we cannot always rely on others to do things. Maybe we are growing up in this difficult exercise.

M. Preiss: Since we're getting closer to the end of our time, and you are getting closer to the end of your mandate.

F. Mogherini: Yes.

M. Preiss: If you will look forward and you could make a wish, what would be the instruments your successor should have in this as you didn't have?

F. Mogherini: I'm not sure it's an instrument. Instruments are there, but if I could make a wish for the next mandate, for things to really work better is consistency of member states. Not unanimity... We never had a problem in adopting a decision unanimously in the council. In five years, I never had a problem of that kind. We never did wording of conclusions, we never had that kind of experience. But what we would really need is ownership. In the sense of a decision taking at European level as it is decided by the member states, it's a 28 deciding it around the table. It's not someone else. Five minutes after that, one day after that, one week after that, that is my own position. That is my own position, that is my own policy, and I work for implementing that. Ownership and consistency. That is what would really I think make the extra difference.

M. Preiss: What was the worst example of not taking that ownership? In which situation?

F. Mogherini: No, I tend to focus on the positive, but I can tell you...

M. Preiss: No, you're not closing after the end of your mandate.

F. Mogherini: **It's true** that this last four months are quite intense, and I'm not yet in the mood of the, you know, the legacy, the lessons learned because there's so much still on-going that you try to keep track and keep working on every single file til the every single day. Differently from the other commissioners, for me... The world doesn't stop, so for me until midnight of the first of November, you're not half in the job. You're in the job, so you just... The first of November I'll reflect on the negative examples, but I have a couple of positive examples. Defense is one of those...

M. Preiss: I'm sure about that.

F. Mogherini: No, but the one I want to say because it's normally very controversial, and that's the external part of our work on migration. On migration our member states have been as divided as they could be, but... And they still are, probably. But on

the external work we have done with Africa in particular, but also with Afghanistan, with Pakistan, with Iran... By the way, Iran hosts three million Afghans, by the way. But the work we've done with Africa in particular makes me proud, because that is something that was not existing when I arrived. I remember very well as an Italian it was a shock to see there was no external migration policy. It was only about borders, and we've started with the full ownership of member states to develop partnerships with our African Union partners, with the countries of origin, of transit. And still a long way to go, but now there is something in place that starts to work. Partnership, European Union, African Union, UN. We've done something good there.

M. Preiss: Thank you very much, Federica Mogherini.

F. Mogherini: Thank you.

M. Preiss: Thanks for this great debate.

F. Mogherini: Thank you, and I'm sorry...

M. Preiss: And all the best for the remaining months.

F. Mogherini: And for getting back my life afterwards, I guess. Thank you so much.

M. Preiss: And thank you everybody here in the room. Enjoy the coffee break, and see you at the next session. Thank you very much.

F. Mogherini: Thank you, bye.

M. Preiss: Thank you.