



**Ana GOMES**

Baroness Catherine Ashton  
Vice-President of the European Commission and High Representative for Foreign  
Affairs and Security Policy  
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Brussels, 24 June, 2011

Dear Baroness Ashton,

Thank you for your letter of 15th June 2011 on the Common Foreign and Security Policy debate in the European Parliament's May plenary session. I am glad we share the sense of urgency on Libya, and I am grateful for your explanations in reply to the points I raised in the plenary session. But I still believe that the EU Council's approach, making EUFOR Libya dependent on an UN OCHA request, is wrong.

EUFOR Libya, as a CSDP operation, should be a military/civilian operation (namely including police for SSR/DDR tasks). It should not, in any way be confused with a humanitarian assistance mission. EUFOR Libya should aim at the enforcement of the arms embargo, the surveillance of borders and, chiefly, the protection of civilians in Libya, as determined by UNSC resolutions 1970 and 1973.

That is also why it needs not, and should not, be bound to a UN OCHA preliminary request. Portraying EUFOR as the answer to humanitarian assistance needs is a big mistake and risks putting in jeopardy truly humanitarian operations. As the EU Council should know, humanitarian organizations reject being confused with security driven operations, to ensure their access to civilian victims of conflict in all sides. Of course, I think that EUFOR Libya could also help establish humanitarian corridors on the ground, such as the one needed for the besieged villages in the western mountains to allow for the delivery of humanitarian assistance - and I have called for



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it a month ago. But that would mean just to open the space for humanitarian action and would not change its CSDP nature, nor its core security mandate.

As for NATO's role in Libya, I believe that must not serve as an excuse for EU inaction in the military/police field. And not just because in other areas NATO and CSDP missions are cooperating, as is the case of Operation Atalanta in the Indian Ocean, of EUPOL Afghanistan and ISAF, or EULEX Kosovo and KFOR. And I am sure that you, High Representative, felt embarrassed, as I felt and hope that EU Foreign and Defence ministers also feel, when US Secretary of Defence William Gates recently in Brussels rebuked NATO European allies for insufficient engagement in the Libya operation. Well, we feel embarrassed because Secretary Gates is right.

What is even more unacceptable is that EU Members States are acting militarily in Libya under NATO or on a bilateral basis, but cannot agree to act there under a EU CSDP operation. It is clear that the EU has a strategic interest in the security and stabilisation of Libya, which lies at Europe's doorstep, for a diversity of reasons, and that efforts should not be spared when our immediate neighbourhood is in question. As the highest EU official responsible for CSDP, I am sure you feel, Dear Cathy, like I do - that the EU is gravely missing a tremendous opportunity to act under CSDP in Libya.

Maybe if EUFOR Libya had already been deployed, articulating and complementing capacities with NATO, we would not now be agonizing about the stalemate on the ground. Besides the civilians that EUFOR Libya could help protect.

Yours sincerely,

Ana Gomes

Member of the European Parliament