

EU Does Not Believe in Walls, Bans over Immigration Issue: EU's Mogherini

VALLETA - The European Union's (EU) way to deal with immigration is cooperation and partnership, not walls and bans, EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini told the press ahead of an informal summit on Friday.

Mogherini said EU leaders would show cooperation and partnership as a European approach to solve the migration issue, which is different from the American way.

"For sure, Europeans differ when it comes to a certain approach, for instance to migration, and I think today we will show our way is cooperation and partnership," she said.

"We do not believe in walls or bans," she added.

Mogherini said EU leaders



would agree at the summit on a package of measures that would help the EU manage immigration flows better and save lives, in partnership with United Nations agencies in Libya.

The Malta summit is an occasion for the EU leaders to discuss the bloc's future following the June 23 Brexit referendum and the first gathering of the EU leaders after Trump became U.S. president. In the morning session of the summit, the 28 leaders, including May, will address the migration crisis amid warnings of more people trying to reach Europe through the dangerous Central Mediterranean route from Libya.

The... (More on P4)... (16)

700,000 More People in Need of Assistance in East Ukraine: OCHA

GENEVA - The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) warned Friday that 700,000 more people would be in need of assistance this year compared with 2016 as a result of protracted fighting in east Ukraine.

The increase would raise the total number of people in need of aid to 3.8 million, according to the office.

Needs assessments for 2017 reveal that the closer people live to the contact line dividing government

and rebel held areas in eastern Ukraine, the greater their humanitarian needs are.

This is particularly true for the elderly, women and children who make up over 70 percent of those affected by ongoing clashes, OCHA highlighted.

OCHA also warned that government-imposed bureaucratic barriers related to the trade of certain goods such as food and medical supplies across the contact line "remains a... (More on P4)... (17)

Turkey, Germany Vow Further Cooperation Against Terror

ANKARA - German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan Thursday vowed further cooperation in the fight against terrorism during Merkel's visit to Ankara, local daily Hürriyet reported.

"International terrorism is not an issue that any single country can manage alone. There should be international cooperation," Erdogan said at a joint press conference with Merkel in Ankara.

"As two NATO allies, I believe our cooperation with

Germany, which is also part of the (anti-IS) coalition forces, should continue just as we performed for Ukraine," he stressed. Both Merkel and Erdogan emphasized the need for cooperation against terror groups that have been posing a threat to both national and international order for Germany and Turkey, in particular the need for a political solution to the Syrian crisis.

Merkel stated that the two countries should more closely cooperate in the fight against "every kind"



of terrorism. Erdogan slammed use of the term "Islamist terror," saying it "severely upsets Muslims. Such a term cannot be used; this is not true." Meanwhile, Erdogan said the referendum would be held in mid-April, and denied opposition parties' claims a... (More on P4)... (18)

Turkish Parliament Submits Constitutional Change Bill to President

ANKARA - Turkey's constitutional change bill was submitted to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan for approval on Thursday, state-run Anadolu Agency reported.

According to the law, Turkish President will have 15 days to approve or reject the bill, which will shift Turkey to an executive presidential system from the current parliamentary system.

If approved, it will be published in the country's Official Gazette, setting the date for a vote. The

Turkish parliament approved the constitutional amendments on January 21 as deputies completed two rounds of voting on 18 articles. A total of 339 MPs voted in favor of the package which will be put to vote in a national referendum that will likely be held in early April. The referendum date will be selected by the Supreme Election Board after President Erdogan approves the amendments. The national referendum is expected to be held on... (More on P4)... (19)

EU Malta Summit Adopts Plan to Stem Migration

VALLETTA - European leaders agreed Friday on an action plan to stem the migration flow into Europe along the Central Mediterranean route during an informal summit in Malta.

According to the plan, priorities will be given to training, equipment and support to the Libyan national coast guard, further efforts to disrupt smuggling business, supporting the development of local communities in Libya, adequate reception capacities and conditions in Libya for migrants and support to

international organisations dealing with the migration issue.

"The European Union is strengthening the mainstreaming of migration within its Official Development Assistance for Africa, which amounts to 31 billion euros during this financial period.

Some of the actions can be funded within projects already underway, notably projects funded by the EU Trust Fund for Africa as appropriate, which mobilizes 1.8 billion euros from the EU budget and 152 million euros from Member



States' contributions," said EU leaders in the Malta Declaration adopted at the ongoing informal summit. To cover the most urgent funding needs now and throughout 2017, the European Commission has decided to mobilize as a first step an additional 200 million euros for the North Africa window of the Fund and to give priority to migration-related projects concerning Libya. (Xinhua)

UNHCR Warns Fighting in West Mosul Could Displace 250,000 People

GENEVA - The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) said Friday that 250,000 people living in western parts of the Iraqi city of Mosul could be forced to flee their homes ahead of an anticipated escalation of conflict between Iraqi government forces and Islamic State (IS) combatants. This would add to the 161,178 men, women and children who have fled the northern city since military operations started in October 2016 to recapture one of the last IS strongholds in the region.

The UN body indicated



that along with other agencies and partners, it was "coordinating plans to respond to a potential significant new flight of displaced Iraqis."

UNHCR reported that it was also assisting civilians

displaced from Hawiga, located some 130 km southeast of Mosul.

According to estimates, up to 114,000 individuals could be displaced from the town as a result of... (More on P4)... (20)

FAO Urges Farmers to Keep Livestock to Tackle Climate Fluctuations

NAKURU - Keeping livestock in dry areas is one of the most effective ways to cushion households from extreme climate fluctuations, a senior official of Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has said.

Piers Simpkin, FAO's Senior Program Coordinator in Kenya said in an interview with Xinhua on Thursday that livestock keeping is an adaptation mechanism to climate variability.

"Keeping livestock in dry rangelands is considered one of the most effective livelihoods that is adapted to reduce the impact of drought through mobility. Mobile livestock systems by definition are low input and low output systems," he said.

Simpkin said FAO is supporting improvement of grazing management in Kenya by encouraging planned grazing mainly benefiting pastoralist... (More on P4)... (21)

Victory for May as UK Court Throws out EU Single Market Challenge

LONDON - The British government welcomed the dismissal on Friday of a legal bid to force parliament to approve any attempt to take Britain out of the European Economic Area (EEA) and the single market as part of its exit from the European Union.

The British Influence think-tank had argued that although last June's referendum had resulted in a "leave" vote, it had not been a mandate for the government of Prime Minister Theresa May to take Britain out of the single market.

But the High Court rejected that argument, with judges saying they would give their reasons later.

Membership of the EEA, which includes the EU countries as well as Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein, provides preferential access to the single market.

Campaigners for a so-called soft Brexit say continued unfettered access to the single market will be vital for Britain's economic prospects once it leaves the EU. But May said in a speech last month that Britain would leave the single market, although she promised to seek the greatest possible access to European markets. A government spokesman welcomed Friday's judgement. "We are glad this attempt... has been dismissed," he said in a statement. "As the prime minister has said, we will not be a member of the single market and we will be seeking a broad new partnership with the EU including a bold and ambitious free trade agreement." (Reuters)

Trump "Disappointed" at Refugee Deal with Australia: White House

WASHINGTON - The White House said Thursday that U.S. President Donald Trump is "unbelievably disappointed" at the refugee deal that the Obama administration signed with Australia.

However, White House spokesman Sean Spicer suggested that Trump will allow the deal to move forward, while stressing that the refugees will go through "a very extreme vetting process."

Australian PM Admits Controversial Trump Phone Call as "Very Frank"

CANBERRA - Australia's Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull says his phone conversation with U.S. President Donald Trump this week was "cordial" but "very frank" as Trump reportedly expressed his anger over the proposed refugee deal between the two countries. The deal was signed by Turnbull and the previous Obama administration late last year, and requires the United States to take in around 1,200 asylum seekers from Australia's offshore detention centers on Nauru and Manus Island. Information leaked earlier in the week, and first published by the Washington Post, revealed the President described the 25-minute phone call with Turnbull as his "worst of the day",

reportedly cutting it short by 35 minutes. On Friday morning, Turnbull admitted the call was "forthright" and said the president was a larger-than-life character. "He's clearly a big personality," Turnbull told radio journalist John Laws on Friday. "I note that his official spokesman described the conversation as a cordial one this morning. 'I can say that it was very frank, it was forthright.'" Trump made his feelings known about the refugee deal publicly on Thursday when he publicly tweeted his displeasure: "Do you believe it? The Obama Administration agreed to take thousands of illegal immigrants from Australia. Why? I will study this dumb deal!" (Xinhua)

Nieghbor News

China Urges US and South Korea to Abandon Missile Defence System

BEIJING - China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Friday urged the US and South Korea not to deploy a missile defence system that the two governments said is intended to protect against a nuclear threat from North Korea.

China restated its opposition to the intercepting rocket system as US Defence Secretary James Mattis on Thursday visited South Korea to reaffirm the two countries' defence plan.

"We firmly oppose the US and the Republic of Korea deploying

THAAD [terminal high-altitude area defense] in the Republic of Korea," Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said during a press conference. "This has not changed and will not change."

Lu added that US and South Korea's actions are undermining the region's strategic security and urged the two countries to "refrain from going further on this wrong path."

Mattis said during a meeting with Korean National Security Office... (More on P4)... (23)

Iranian Foreign Minister "Unmoved by Threats" from U.S

ANKARA - Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif tweeted on Friday that the Islamic Republic was unmoved by U.S. threats following its missile test launch and that Tehran would never initiate war.

"Iran unmoved by threats as we derive security from our people. Will never initiate war, but we can only rely on our own means of defense," Zarif wrote.

U.S. President Donald Trump tweeted early on Friday that "Iran is playing with fire" and "they don't appreciate how 'kind' President Obama was to them. Not me!" Trump said on Thursday

that "nothing is off the table" in dealing with Iran following its launch of a ballistic missile. Fellow Republicans in Congress said they would back him up with new sanctions.

Zarif said Iran had no intention to use its military might against any country, except in self-defense. "We will never use our weapons against anyone, except in self-defense. Let us see if any of those who complain can make the same statement," he tweeted.

Iran said on Thursday it would not yield to "useless" U.S. threats from "an inexperienced person" over its missile program. (Reuters)

China to Send Top Official to Pakistan for Counter-Terror Talks

ISLAMABAD - Playing down reports that it was behind the detention of Jamaat-ud-Dawa chief Hafeez Saeed, China said on Friday that it was sending a top official to Pakistan for talks on counter-terrorism amid mounting pressure on Islamabad from India, Afghanistan and the United States to rein in militant groups.

Vice-Foreign Minister Cheng Guoping will

visit Pakistan for talks on counter-terrorism, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang told a media briefing here while replying to a question whether the talks would include a discussion on militant groups in Pakistan and concerns of Afghanistan and India.

While Mr. Lu did not provide any details, Mr. Cheng is expected to be in Islamabad from February 6 to 9. (Monitoring Desk)

Turkmenistan, UAE to Hold Business Talks

ASHGABAT - The next meeting of the joint Turkmen-UAE intergovernmental commission will be held in the first half of 2017, the Turkmen Foreign Ministry said in a message Friday.

According to the message, the issue was raised during the meeting of Turkmen Foreign Minister Rashid Meredov and UAE Extraordinary Ambassador Hassan Abdullah Al Adhab. Particular attention was paid to the strengthening of the political and diplomatic cooperation, intensification

of the trade and economic relations and expansion of cultural and humanitarian contacts between Turkmenistan and UAE, the ministry said.

In this regard, the need for improving the effectiveness of bilateral cooperation mechanisms, in particular, joint intergovernmental commission, was stressed, the ministry said. According to the message, Turkmenistan and UAE will consider the possibility of preparing the cooperation program between the foreign ministries soon. ... (More on P4)... (24)

Uzbekistan Making Progress on Labor Reforms, Organized Child Labor: ILO

TASHKENT - The International Labor Organization (ILO) says the Government of Uzbekistan is making progress in reforms to address risks of forced labor in its cotton industry, reports the World Bank in press release.

In a report released today, following its independent monitoring of the 2016 cotton harvest season, the ILO concludes organized

child labor is now socially unacceptable in Uzbekistan and the practice has been phased out.

"The unacceptability of child labour is recognized by all sections of society: authorities, teachers, specialists, farmers, parents and children themselves. Uzbekistan has phased-out organized child labor." ILO Report The ILO report says that... (More on P4)... (25)