

## Council conclusions on Syria

1. The conflict in Syria and the suffering of the Syrian people is showing no sign of abating. The scale of the tragedy, having killed 250,000 men, women and children, displaced 7.6 million inside the country and sent over 4 million fleeing into neighbouring and other countries, is now the world's largest humanitarian disaster, with no parallel in recent history. The EU, as the largest donor, has demonstrated its willingness and commitment to do what it can to alleviate the humanitarian consequences. As the crisis intensifies there is an increasingly urgent need to find a lasting solution that will end this conflict. Only a Syrian-led political process leading to a peaceful and inclusive transition, based on the principles of the Geneva communiqué of 30 June 2012, will bring back stability to Syria, enable peace and reconciliation and create the necessary environment for efficient counter terrorism efforts and maintain the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian State. There cannot be a lasting peace in Syria under the present leadership and until the legitimate grievances and aspirations of all components of the Syrian society are addressed.
2. The EU's objective is to bring an end to the conflict and enable the Syrian people to live in peace in their own country. The international community has to unite around two complementary and interlinked tracks - a political one that aims to bring an end to the civil war by addressing all the root causes of the conflict and establish an inclusive political transition process that will restore peace to the country - and a security one to focus on the fight against the regional and global threat of Da'esh.
3. The EU reiterates its full support to the UN-led efforts and the work of UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura to build this political track. The EU emphasizes the need to accelerate the work of the entire international community on the political track in the framework of the UN-led process. The EU is already actively contributing to the UN initiatives and will increase its diplomatic work in support of the UN-led efforts, including the UN Special Envoy's proposal for intra-Syrian working groups.
4. We call on all Syrian parties to show a clear and concrete commitment to the UN-led process and to participate actively in the working groups. The EU underlines the urgency for the moderate political opposition and associated armed groups to unite behind a common approach in order to present an alternative to the Syrian people. These efforts must be inclusive involving women and civil society. The EU will sustain its support to the moderate opposition, including the SOC, and recalls that it is a vital element in fighting extremism and has a key role to play in the political transition.
5. The EU will continue to put all of its political weight, actively and effectively, behind UN-led international efforts to find a political solution to the conflict, and calls on regional and international partners to do likewise. We urge all those with influence on the parties, including on the Syrian regime, to use this influence to encourage a constructive role in the process leading to a political transition and to end the cycle of violence. The EU will pro-actively engage with key regional actors such as , Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iran, Iraq and international partners within the UN framework to build the conditions for a, peaceful and inclusive transition. In this context, the Council recalls its decision to task the HRVP to explore ways in which the EU could actively promote more constructive regional cooperation.
6. The protection of civilians in Syria must be a priority for the international community. The EU condemns the excessive, disproportionate and indiscriminate attacks that the Syrian regime continues to commit against its own people. The Assad regime bears the greatest responsibility for the 250.000 deaths of the conflict and the millions of displaced people. The EU recalls that international humanitarian law applies to all parties, and human rights need to be fully respected. We call on all parties to stop all forms of indiscriminate shelling and bombardment against civilian areas and structures such as hospitals and schools and, in particular, on the Syrian regime to cease all aerial bombardments, including the use of barrel bombs in line with UNSC Resolution 2139 and the use of chemical weapons in line with UNSCR 2209. The systematic targeting of civilians by the regime has led to mass displacements and encouraged recruitment to and the flourishing of terrorist groups in Syria. This calls for urgent attention and action.

The EU will reinforce its efforts to scale up the implementation of the UNSC Resolutions 2139, 2165 and 2191 to deliver cross-border and cross line assistance in order to help those Syrians most desperately in need.

7. The EU strongly condemns the indiscriminate attacks, atrocities, killings, conflict-related sexual violence, abuses of human rights and serious violations of international humanitarian law which are perpetrated by Da'esh and other terrorist groups, against all civilians, including against Christians and other religious and ethnic groups. The EU supports international efforts and initiatives to address these issues. The EU condemns Da'esh's deliberate destruction of cultural heritage in Syria and Iraq, which amount to a war crime under international law.
8. Those responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Syria must be held accountable. The EU expresses its deepest concern about the findings of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria. The allegations of torture and executions based on the evidence presented by the Caesar report are also of great concern. The EU reiterates its call to the UN Security Council to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court.
9. The EU supports the efforts of the Global Coalition to counter Da'esh in Syria and Iraq. As a consequence of its policies and actions, the Assad regime cannot be a partner in the fight against Dae'sh. Action against Da'esh needs to be closely coordinated among all partners, and needs clearly to target Da'esh, Jabhat al-Nusra, and the other UN-designated terrorist groups.

10. The recent Russian military attacks that go beyond Dae'sh and other UN-designated terrorist groups, as well as on the moderate opposition, are of deep concern, and must cease immediately. So too must the Russian violations of the sovereign airspace of neighbouring countries.

This military escalation risks prolonging the conflict, undermining a political process, aggravating the humanitarian situation and increasing radicalization. Our aim should be to de-escalate the conflict. The EU calls on Russia to focus its efforts on the common objective of achieving a political solution to the conflict. In this context it urges Russia to push for a reduction of violence and implementation of confidence-building measures by the Syrian Regime along the provisions of UNSC Resolution 2139.

11. The EU will intensify humanitarian diplomacy and seek ways to improve access and protection as well as to promote humanitarian principles and local consensus on guidelines for the delivery of aid.
12. The EU has substantially increased its financial efforts to support those who have fled the conflict, within and outside Syria, with new commitments to humanitarian aid and to longer-term work supporting the resilience of refugees in the neighbourhood. The EU and its Member states have already provided €4 billion for relief and recovery assistance to those affected by the conflict inside Syria and refugees and host communities in neighbouring countries. The EU and its Member States will continue to provide humanitarian assistance through the UN, ICRC and international NGOs. At the same time, the EU will increase its longer-term development and stabilization assistance, to these and other partners, including through the EU Regional Trust Fund recently established in response to the Syrian Crisis (the "Madad Fund") which has now been equipped with over €500 million in EU funding to be matched by efforts from EU Member States and other countries. The EU calls on other countries to sustain and increase their own contributions in response to the Syria crisis. The Council agreed specifically on the need to increase the level of cooperation and partnership with Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey to ensure equal access to shelter, education, health and livelihoods for refugees and their host communities with the support of additional EU assistance.

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