



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 23 May 2011

10580/11

**COMAG 71
PESC 661**

NOTE

Subject: Syria
- Council Conclusions

At its meeting on 23 May 2011 the Foreign Affairs Council adopted the conclusions on Syria as set out in the Annex.

Council Conclusions on Syria

1. The EU condemns in the strongest terms the ongoing repression in Syria and the unacceptable violence used by the military and security forces against peaceful protestors which have led to hundreds of fatalities and many more people being injured. Those responsible for this violence should be held accountable. The EU expresses its condolences to the families of the victims and salutes the courage of the Syrian people.
2. The EU urges the Syrian leadership to agree and grant access to an urgent mission of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to the country, as requested by the United Nations Human Rights Council on 29 April.
3. The EU is deeply concerned at continuing mass arrests, intimidations and instances of torture and calls for their immediate halt. The EU calls for the immediate release of all those arrested for their participation in peaceful protests, as well as of all political prisoners and human rights defenders. Syria must abide by its international commitments, in particular its obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and uphold the right to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression. The EU is equally concerned by the refusal of the Syrian authorities to grant access to foreign media to report freely on the unfolding events in the country. It also condemns the arrests and intimidations of Syrian journalists by the authorities.
4. The EU is deeply troubled by the military closure of a number of cities, such as Deraa, Baniyas and Homs and by reported hindrance of access to medical treatments and to basic services. The EU calls on the Syrian Government to guarantee free and independent access to humanitarian organisations and provision of humanitarian aid to these areas and to fully respect humanitarian principles.

5. The EU urges the Syrian authorities to respond to the legitimate demands of the Syrian people by launching an inclusive and genuine national dialogue and by implementing without delay and through a concrete timetable, meaningful political reforms. This is the only way to initiate a peaceful transition to democracy and provide stability for Syria in the long term.
6. As part of the ongoing review of all aspects of its cooperation with Syria, the EU has decided to suspend all preparations in relation to new bilateral cooperation programs and to suspend the ongoing bilateral programs with the Syrian authorities under ENPI and MEDA instruments. The EU Member States stand ready to review their bilateral cooperation in this regard. The Council invites the EIB to not approve new EIB financing operations in Syria for the time being. The EU will consider the suspension of further Community assistance to Syria in light of developments.
7. The EU recalls that it will not take further steps with regard to the Association Agreement with Syria and therefore the signing of the Agreement is not on the agenda.
8. On the 9th of May the EU decided to impose restrictive measures against Syria and persons responsible for the violent repression against the civilian population with a view to achieving a fundamental change of policy by the Syrian leadership without delay. The Council has decided to further strengthen these restrictive measures by designating additional persons, including at the highest level of leadership. The EU is determined to take further measures without delay should the Syrian leadership choose not to change swiftly its current path.
