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Syria – EU Foreign Ministers call for “Geneva 2” with all parties to the conflict taking part

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To resolve the Syrian crisis, a political solution that meets the legitimate aspirations of the population needs to be found. The EU welcomes the call for a peace conference in Geneva before the end of November, in which all parties must take part. These were some of the points underscored by the European Union’s Foreign Ministers at the Foreign Affairs Council in Luxembourg today.

Syria: united, inclusive and democratic

The EU continues to be extremely concerned by the deteriorating situation in Syria, which makes it all the more urgent to put an end to all violence and to the suffering of the Syrian people. […] The EU condemns the unprecedented use of force by the regime. It also condemns the continuing widespread and systematic violations of international humanitarian law and human rights in Syria, including increasing attacks on religious and ethnic communities. For Europe, a political solution must translate into the creation of in a united, inclusive and democratic Syria.

Credible political transition

The EU urges all sides of the conflict to respond positively to this call and to adhere publicly to a credible political transition based on the principles set forth at the first Geneva Conference. The objective of the Geneva 2 Conference must be the establishment of a transitional governing body (TGB) with full executive powers and control of all governmental and all security institutions.

For this reason, the EU calls on the opposition to participate actively at the conference and encourages the Syrian National Coalition to take a leading role during negotiations.

Isolating the extremists

The EU condemned in the strongest terms the horrific chemical attack perpetrated on August 21. This crime, as well as other atrocities and human rights violations and abuses, must be investigated in order to find and punish those responsible. The EU recalled that the UN Security Council can refer the situation to the International Criminal Court.

The EU is seriously concerned with the growing involvement of extremist and foreign non-state actors in the fighting in Syria, and calls on all relevant parties to halt the support to these groups. It also calls on the Syrian Arab Republic to meet all its obligations regarding the destruction of its chemical weapons arsenal in the most complete, diligent and transparent manner.

Geneva 2: much remains to be done, says Bonino

From Luxembourg, Minister Bonino pointed out that “a date has been mentioned for Geneva 2, but we can’t take it for granted that the conference will take place because a lot of work still needs to be done. Everyone’s goal is to see the conference succeed. The “work to be done” consists of the forthcoming meeting of the “Friends of Syria” in London and Minister Bonino’s meetings with the American Secretary of State, Kerry, in Rome on Wednesday and with her British colleague, William Hague, in London on Friday 25 October 2013.

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