European Commission -
Speech
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Speech by Commissioner Šuica on Syria at the Plenary of the European Parliament

Strasbourg, 10 February 2026

Dear President, Honourable Members,

The recent developments in Syria reflect the challenges that the country is still facing – one year after the fall of Assad's regime.

The fighting between the Syrian Transitional Government (STG) and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) led to a changed geopolitical landscape in Aleppo and North-East Syria, with major gains for Damascus.

The handling of the situation in the North East will be a decisive and indicative test for the Syrian Transitional Government.

There is now a window of opportunity for Syria to show that it can move towards a truly inclusive transition.

The STG and SDF are currently implementing the 30 January agreement. It includes:

integration in the mainstream administrative and security forces;

political participation of Kurds in local and central governance;

education recognition; and

governmental control over key oil fields, airport and border crossings.

It is important that the Presidential Decree of 16 January granting a broad spectrum of rights to the Kurdish people is fully implemented.

Honourable Members,

The recent developments also highlight the ongoing security risks, especially the potential resurgence of Da'esh.

We remain concerned about the escape of an unknown number of detainees.

While transferring detainees to Iraq will alleviate pressure on Syria, the burden remains significant.

Damascus is now the main interlocutor for countering terrorism.

Nonetheless, the Kurds have been a steadfast ally against terrorism, and we hope they will remain engaged while integrated in the mainstream Syrian institutions.

The EU and Member States are the main donors for Syria, including regarding the camps and North-East Syria.

We will continue supporting Syria through bilateral assistance and within the framework of the Global Coalition.

As the largest humanitarian donor, the EU remains also committed to providing humanitarian aid to Syrians as long as needed. However, humanitarian assistance alone cannot meet all the needs in Syria and must be complemented with increased development and recovery funding.

President, Honourable Members,

Since the fall of Assad, the EU has adapted its relationship with Syria to support an inclusive political transition, that meets the aspiration of all Syrians, by leveraging political dialogue, sanctions, and assistance.

In 2025, we hosted the Ninth Brussels Conference. We also launched the Syria Partnership Coordination Forum, and co-organised the Day of Dialogue focused on civil society.

We mobilised more than 424 million Euro in EU support for Syria, including 175 million Euro for socio-economic recovery, which we must drive forward even more vigorously.

The visit of Presidents von der Leyen and Costa on 9 January was a clear signal of our willingness to engage with Damascus. It has highlighted a new political partnership, reinforcing economic cooperation, and offering a new substantial financial package of 620 million Euro for 2026 and 2027.

There is clearly a mutual interest for us and the Syrians to work together on institution and capacity building.

Through this, the EU can anchor the transition in key principles of sustainable governance, accountability, and justice and contribute to rebuilding trust between the state and society.

The EU remains committed to engaging with Syria and regional partners in view of ensuring both an inclusive transition and stability and security.

Thank you.

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