Visit to Damascus by the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Guariglia

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The mission to Damascus by the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Ambassador Riccardo Guariglia, took place on 12 and 13 September. The visit – organised at the behest of Foreign Minister Tajani – is part of the ongoing strengthening of bilateral relations between Italy and Syria, which were revitalised by Minister Tajani's visit on 10 January 2025 – one of the first visits by a representative of a European government to Syria following the fall of the Assad regime.

At the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Secretary-General Guariglia – accompanied by the Italian Ambassador to Damascus, Stefano Ravagnan – met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Asaad al Shaibani. The topics discussed included Shaibani's forthcoming visit to Rome to mark the reopening of the Syrian Embassy in Italy, the growing opportunities in the private sector – further enhanced by the establishment of the Italian-Syrian Business Council – and the initiatives of the Italian Development Cooperation.

The Secretary-General then met with Hamza al Mustafa, Adviser to the Minister for European Affairs, and Sally Shabout, Director of the Europe Department. The talks covered all aspects of bilateral cooperation, starting with projects in the fields of agriculture, energy and the protection of cultural heritage, as well as the humanitarian interventions planned in accordance with the guidelines set by the Syrian Government. These topics will also be addressed by a mission led by the Italian Cooperation, scheduled for late October.

The Secretary-General also met with the Minister of the Economy, Mohammad Nidal al Shaar, to discuss trade and potential investment opportunities, and held talks with the Minister of Finance, Mohammed Barnieh, and the Governor of the Central Bank, Safwat Raslan. During the mission, Ambassador Guariglia visited some of the major places of worship in the Old City, such as the Umayyad Great Mosque and the Saint Ananias House, as well as the historic Italian Hospital and the National Museum, which was the subject of a major Italian Cooperation project prior to 2011 and is now set to be revived.

Source : https://www.esteri.it/en/sala_stampa/archivionotizie/comunicati/2026/09/visita-a-damasco-del-segretario-generale-della-farnesina-amb-guariglia/