Statement by President von der Leyen with President Costa and Syrian President al-Sharaa

Damascus, 9 January 2026

President al-Sharaa,

Thank you for your warm welcome to Damascus today. It is now one year ago that decades of fear, silence and state violence finally began to give way to hope, opportunity and the possibility of renewal. We know that the path to reconciliation and recovery remain difficult and long. Because healing, rebuilding lives and creating trust in institutions takes time. We are here today to work with you for Syria and for all Syrians. The violent escalations of recent days are worrisome. Continued dialogue between all parties is urgently needed. The roadmap on Suwayda that you developed with Jordan and the US is a very good example for the way forward. We support your commitment to deliver on the goal of a new, peaceful, inclusive and safe Syria.

Since December 2024, the EU has once again been present in Damascus, working closely with the authorities and civil society. And today, we propose a new framework of cooperation. It has three pillars. First, to launch a new political partnership, starting with a High-Level Dialogue in the first half of this year so that we explore together how the EU can best support Syria's path towards recovery, reconstruction and civil peace.

The second pillar is about the economic cooperation that we want to deliver We already started by lifting all economic sanctions early last year. The EU has invited the European Investment Bank to resume its activity in Syria. And today, we would like to start discussions on resuming our Cooperation Agreement. So that Syria can start to benefit once again from access to the European economic market.

The third pillar is that we want to underpin this new cooperation with a substantial financial support package. After years of devastation under the Assad regime, Syria's recovery and reconstruction needs are immense and I just could see it with my own eyes. We want to strengthen our engagement, with financial support of around EUR 620 million for 2026 and 2027. This financial support will include humanitarian aid, of course but also early recovery support and bilateral support. This whole package is necessary to support the government in restoring the essential services for the population and to rebuild state institutions. We are committed to supporting you in reviving Syria's economy and bringing communities back together. We would like Syrians to have a real prospect of coming back home and rebuilding their lives here. We are therefore stepping up our work with regional partners, including Türkiye, Jordan and Lebanon, as well as the UNHCR, to support safe, dignified and voluntary returns.

Thank you for receiving us here, and we have a huge package to discuss.

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