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Speech by Commissioner Šuica at the Senior Officials Meeting of the Syria Partnership Coordination Forum

Brussels, 11 May 2026

Dear Minister al-Shaibani,

Dear colleagues,

Welcome to the Syria Partnership Coordination Forum.

I am very happy to see all our partners around this room.

Because we have a historic opportunity.

Syria is transitioning from crisis to recovery.

You have a government that wants to unite and rebuild the country.

Creating strong institutions that serve all Syrian people in a genuinely inclusive way, advancing swiftly with the necessary reforms.

And you have strong EU support in both efforts.

Given the magnitude of the challenge, donor coordination is of vital importance.

This is the exact purpose of this platform.

To listen to your priorities and coordinate our support.

I am proud to say we are not starting from scratch.

Already last year, together with Minister Al-Shaibani, we held a very constructive workshop in the margins of the ninth Brussels Conference.

Last June, I went to Damascus, working with Syrian authorities to set the groundwork for cooperation.

And we organised a meeting of this Forum last July focused on building strong institutions.

Because building strong inclusive institutions based on good governance, accountability, and the rule of law, is crucial.

Such institutions are the necessary basis for a Syrian State that delivers for all Syrians and ensures stability, security and an investment friendly environment.

This is key for reconstruction as well as for building the trust of your citizens.

I am happy that today we will have the opportunity to see Syria's vision for recovery.

Our goal, in the EU, is to support you.

As President von der Leyen reaffirmed while visiting Damascus in January, our goals are aligned.

And the participation of President Al-Sharaa to the informal EU leaders meeting in Cyprus is a testament of our commitment – to Syria's full reintegration in the Euro-Mediterranean family.

We also want to see Syria play an active in the implementation of the Pact for the Mediterranean.

And I thank you for the interest you have already shown in this, as there are many regional initiatives you can join.

Now is the time for action.

In two ways: know-how and funding.

First, know-how.

I am proud to say we will soon have the EU Technical Assistance Hub up and running.

We are committing EUR 14 million, along with some Member States contributing, in the spirit of Team Europe.

The hub will act as a one-stop-shop for concrete and targeted support, providing knowledge to empower your action.

Second, funding.

We know the needs in Syria are immense.

I lived through a war, and I know of the consequences it leaves behind.

Reconstruction is a very difficult task.

Here, too, the EU is helping where we can.

For example, together with Italy, we have put forward 15 million euro to rebuild the Al Rustan hospital in Homs.

We are also pursuing very encouraging discussions with partners – with our Jordanian friends, with Qatar, with the Islamic Development Bank – on several joint projects, from agriculture to access to finance and police cooperation.

From our side, as you know, we are currently working full speed on the implementation of a financial package of 175 million euro.

In addition, this summer we will present a second financial package of 280 million euro for 2026-2027, part of the 620 million euro in financial assistance announced by President von der Leyen.

I am encouraged by the discussions that took place last week in Damascus on how best to use these funds.

Because, done right, this funding has the potential to unlock much greater investment – not only from institutional partners, but from the private sector and from European and international development banks.

This effort to bring together public and private commitments is very important.

Syria has a population that is eager for the opportunity to rebuild. And it has an entrepreneurial diaspora that wants to contribute.

We must succeed in realising their aspirations.

This success will depend on key reforms by the transitional government:

- Making sure all Syrians contribute to decisions on the future of the country.
- Ensuring transparent public financial management and economic governance.
- A solid commitment to the rule of law and transitional justice.
- And supporting and benefitting from a vibrant civil society.

These are crucial steps towards trust.

They are essential reforms to build long term resilience and prosperity.

And, to make this happen, we want to bring the private sector together in an investment conference, later this year.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As I said at the beginning: this is a historic opportunity.

With a population that wants and needs peace and stability.

With a government that is committed to delivering – truly turning the page on the history of this country.

With partners like the EU – who are seriously committed to supporting and coordinating all our efforts.

I am looking forward to your presentation and to our discussions.

And to seeing the results of this work on the ground, when I visit Syria again.

Thank you for being here, for being open to our support, and for being committed to the Syrian people.

SPEECH/26/1192

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