

PRESS RELEASE

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North East Syria: Council adopts conclusions

1. The Council recalls the 9 October 2019 Declaration of the High Representative on behalf of the European Union and urges Turkey again to cease its unilateral military action in North East Syria and to withdraw its forces.
2. The EU condemns Turkey's military action which seriously undermines the stability and the security of the whole region, resulting in more civilians suffering and further displacement and severely hindering access to humanitarian assistance. It makes the prospects for the UN-led political process to achieve peace in Syria far more difficult. It also significantly undermines the progress achieved so far by the Global Coalition to defeat Da'esh, stressing that Da'esh remains a threat to European security as well as Turkey's, regional and international security.
The European Union remains committed to the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Syrian state. These can be assured only through a genuine political transition in line with UNSCR 2254 and the 2012 Geneva Communiqué, negotiated by the Syrian parties within the UN-led Geneva process.
3. Turkey is a key partner of the European Union and a critically important actor in the Syrian crisis and the region. Turkey's security concerns in North-East Syria should be addressed through political and diplomatic means, not with military action, and in accordance with international humanitarian law.
4. The continued efforts of the international community, including at the UN Security Council, in order to stop this military unilateral action are urgently needed. The Council calls for a ministerial meeting of the International Coalition against Da'esh in order to address how to pursue its efforts in the current context.
5. In this context, and taking into account the fact that Turkey's military action with its dramatic consequences is still ongoing, the EU recalls the decision taken by some Member States to immediately halt arms exports licensing to Turkey. Member States commit to strong national positions regarding their arms export policy to Turkey on the basis of the provision of the Common Position 2008/944/CFSP on arms export control, including the strict application of criteria 4 on regional stability. The relevant Council working group will meet later this week to coordinate and review the Member states' positions on this matter.
6. The EU recalls that it will not provide stabilisation or development assistance in areas where the rights of local populations are ignored or violated. The EU remains engaged in its efforts towards effectively addressing the serious humanitarian and refugee crisis in light of evolving needs.

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