

PRESS RELEASE

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Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on Syria

The EU welcomes the adoption by the UN Security Council of Resolution 2393 which renews the authorization of the cross-border humanitarian operations into Syria. These are desperately needed by 3 million people who still cannot be reached by any other means. The EU is also deeply concerned by the continued lack of humanitarian access to the 13.1 million people in need of assistance throughout Syria, including over 1.3 million living in siege-like conditions.

In Syria, the fighting is far from over. The EU strongly condemns the continued systematic, widespread and gross violations and abuses of human rights as well as recent attacks and the continued siege of Eastern Ghouta. We urge the Syrian regime to allow immediate, sustained and unhindered access for aid deliveries and medical evacuations. The regime's persistent obstacles to humanitarian aid and medical evacuations in Eastern Ghouta are a blatant violation of international humanitarian law and several UN Security Council Resolutions.

The EU firmly believes only a credible political solution in line with UNSCR 2254 and the 2012 Geneva Communique will end the war and ensure the sustainable stability of Syria. In this context, the EU reiterates that it will be ready to assist in the reconstruction of Syria only when a comprehensive, genuine and inclusive political transition, negotiated by the Syrian parties in the conflict on the basis of UNSCR 2254 and the Geneva Communique, is firmly under way.

The EU commends the Syrian Negotiation Commission's constructive and united engagement in the last round of the Geneva talks. It deplores, however, the Syrian regime's continued obstruction of talks, which has prevented progress. Therefore, the EU calls upon the regime's allies, notably Russia, to ensure that the Syrian regime fully engages in this UNSC-mandated process.

In order to reach that aim the EU reaffirms the primacy of the UN-led Geneva process and its full support for the work of the UN Special Envoy. The EU will continue to support this process including through organising the second Brussels Conference on the "Future of Syria and the region" that will take place in spring 2018.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro* and Albania*, the EFTA countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this Declaration.

*The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

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