COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION

EN

Council conclusions on Syria

3159th FOREIGN AFFAIRS Council meeting
Luxembourg, 23 April 2012

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"1. The EU welcomes the unanimous adoption of the UNSC resolution 2042 on 14 April authorising the immediate deployment of an advance team of up to 30 unarmed military observers and of the UNSC resolution 2043 on 21 April establishing the full UN supervision mission in Syria (UNSMIS) with an initial deployment of up to 300 unarmed military observers as well as an appropriate civilian component, to monitor a cessation of armed violence and to monitor and support all aspects of the joint UN-League of Arab States Special Envoy Kofi Annan's six point proposal. The EU calls for an immediate and full implementation of the UNSC resolutions. It also calls on all the Members of the UN Security Council to continue to support Kofi Annan in his efforts and ensure that the fully-fledged UN observation mission in Syria is deployed expeditiously and operationalised without delay. It is crucial that UNSC Members use all their influence to ensure that the UNSC resolutions are fully implemented.

The EU strongly urges the Syrian government to allow the effective operation and deployment of the mission and its advance team and allow full freedom of movement, access and communication including agreement on the use of air assets. The EU and its Member States are ready to provide support that might be requested to guarantee the success of the observer mission.

2. The EU reaffirms its full support to the Joint UN-League of Arab States Special Envoy Kofi Annan’s mission and his six point Plan. A complete cessation of violence is an essential step in the full implementation of this Plan. The EU recalls its full support for the Special Envoy’s efforts to facilitate a peaceful Syrian-led and inclusive dialogue leading to a political solution that meets the democratic aspirations of the Syrian people on the basis of the UN General Assembly resolution of 16 February 2012 and League of Arab States resolutions, in particular those of 22 January, 12 February and 10 March 2012.

3. Recalling its previous Council conclusions on Syria, the European Union remains deeply concerned about the fragility of the situation in Syria with reports of the use of heavy weaponry in civilian areas. The EU urges the Syrian government to implement its commitments in their entirety and to show a visible and verifiable sign of change by withdrawing all troops and heavy weapons from population centres to their barracks to facilitate a sustained cessation of violence. The EU strongly condemns the systematic and widespread violations of human rights by the regime. It recalls that all those responsible for human rights violations should be held accountable. It calls upon all parties in Syria to cease immediately violence in all its forms.

4. The European Union reiterates its concerns about the humanitarian plight of the Syrian civilian population. The Syrian authorities must grant immediate, unimpeded and full access of humanitarian organisations to all areas of Syria in order to allow them to deliver humanitarian assistance including medical care. The EU calls on all parties to cooperate fully with the UN and relevant humanitarian organisations to facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance. The EU welcomes the efforts made by neighbouring countries to host Syrian refugees who fled violence in Syria. The European Union and its Member States will continue to assist in providing them with dignified living conditions. The EU also welcomes the outcome of the Syria Humanitarian Forum, held in Geneva on 20 April, calling for increased access and scaling up of humanitarian capacities to meet the identified humanitarian needs.

5. The European Union remains committed to the Syrian opposition's struggle for freedom, dignity and democracy for the Syrian people. It reconfirms its engagement with the Syrian opposition seeking non violent, democratic and inclusive change. The EU welcomes efforts by the Syrian National Council (SNC) and other opposition groups to articulate a common vision for the foundations of a new Syria. The EU calls on the SNC and other opposition groups to continue to support fully the Annan Peace Plan, and to put in place an all-embracing opposition platform under the auspices of the Arab League to advance their common vision for working towards an inclusive, orderly and peaceful transition in Syria.

6. The EU approved today further sanctions, imposing restrictive measures on export of further goods and technology which may be used for repression and banning the export to Syria of luxury goods. The EU will continue its policy of imposing additional measures targeting the regime, not the civilian population, as long as repression continues. The EU will also continue to urge the international community to join its efforts, in taking steps to apply and enforce restrictive measures and sanctions on the Syrian regime and its supporters. In this context, the EU welcomes the first meeting of the international working group on sanctions which was held in Paris on 17 April. It calls on all Syrians to dissociate themselves from the repressive policy of the regime in order to facilitate a political transition.

7. As soon as a genuine democratic transition begins, the EU is ready to develop a new and ambitious partnership with Syria across all areas of mutual interest, including by mobilising assistance, strengthening trade and economic relations and supporting transitional justice and the political transition."
