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COUNCIL DECISION (CFSP) 2026/1105

of 18 May 2026

amending Decision 2013/255/CFSP concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in Syria

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on European Union, and in particular Article 29 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy,

Whereas:

(1) On 31 May 2013, the Council adopted Decision 2013/255/CFSP ([1]).

(2) On 27 May 2025, the Council adopted Decision (CFSP) 2025/1096 ([2]) extending the restrictive measures set out in Decision 2013/255/CFSP until 1 June 2026. That Decision also lifted all economic sanctions on Syria with the aim of supporting Syria's inclusive political transition, as well as its swift economic recovery, reconstruction, and stabilisation, in line with a gradual and reversible approach. However, the Council maintained restrictive measures related to the al-Assad regime in line with its call for accountability as well as restrictive measures based on security grounds. In parallel, the Council introduced additional restrictive measures against human rights violators and those fuelling instability in Syria.

(3) In its conclusions of 23 June 2025, the Council underscored the Union's commitment to supporting a peaceful and inclusive Syrian-led and Syrian-owned transition, where human rights and fundamental freedoms must be respected, protected and fulfilled for everyone, without discrimination of any kind. The Council reiterated the Union's strong support for Syrian and international efforts to achieve accountability for all atrocities committed by the al-Assad regime and underlined that a comprehensive and inclusive transitional justice process is a necessity for reconciliation and lasting peace.

(4) Despite the fall of the al-Assad regime and the establishment of the transitional authorities, the situation in Syria remains unstable and al-Assad's network, spread inside and outside Syria, has not yet been held accountable and cannot be considered dissolved. While progress has been made in the transition process, including the launch of the first public trial against al-Assad and his associates, ensuring justice and accountability for the crimes committed by the al-Assad regime is a long-term process connected to the aspirations of the Syrian people for an inclusive political transition in the country. Key milestones highlighted in United Nations Security Council Resolution 2254 (2015), including the establishment of a functioning People's Assembly and the drafting of a new constitution that would irreversibly engrain Syria on the path of liberation, have not yet been achieved.

(5) There remains a credible risk of destabilisation and a potential resurgence of the former al-Assad regime's influence, exemplified by incidents in support of the al-Assad regime aimed at undermining the transitional process that have led to deadly violence in Syria's coastal regions and beyond. Listed individuals and entities linked to the al-Assad regime continue to hold powerful and influential roles and pose a risk of supporting, through financing or other means, further armed conflict, and may play a part in attempts to reverse the transition. In her statement of 11 March 2025 on behalf of the Union, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy expressed grave concerns about the widespread violence in Syria's coastal region and strongly condemned the attacks by pro-Assad militias against security forces and the horrific crimes committed against civilians, including summary killings, and stressed in that regard that effective measures must be taken to prevent such crimes from happening again.

([1]) Council Decision 2013/255/CFSP of 31 May 2013 concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in Syria (OJ L 147, 1.6.2013, p. 14, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2013/255/oj).

([2]) Council Decision (CFSP) 2025/1096 of 27 May 2025 amending Decision 2013/255/CFSP concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in Syria (OJ L, 2025/1096, 28.5.2025, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2025/1096/oj).

(6) Members of the al-Assad and Makhlouf families and associated individuals have yet to be held accountable for their involvement in the brutal repression against the civilian population in Syria and pose a risk of trying to escalate conflict, deepen sectarian divisions, ignite sectarian violence and hinder the peaceful transition and national reconciliation in Syria.

(7) Syrian Government Ministers in power after May 2011 under the former al-Assad regime are to be considered jointly and severally responsible for the policy of repression pursued by the former al-Assad regime and continue to pose a risk to the peaceful transition in Syria.

(8) Militias, armed groups, security forces and intelligence bodies connected and loyal to the former al-Assad regime pose a risk of further escalation and repression against the civilian population in Syria and threaten the peaceful transition and national reconciliation in Syria.

(9) More than 100 suspected chemical weapons sites remain in Syria after the fall of the al-Assad regime, a number which is much higher than was ever acknowledged before the fall of the al-Assad regime. The destruction of Syria's remaining chemical weapons stockpiles remains a priority to ensure the protection of the Syrian population, as outlined in the conclusions of the European Council of 19 December 2024.

(10) Leading businesspersons operating in Syria linked to the former al-Assad regime and who have amassed substantial wealth and power due to this connection remain influential and their networks have stayed in place. As such, those individuals carry an inherent risk of violent repression of the civil society and the peaceful transition in Syria. While the Council acknowledges the progress made by the Syrian Transitional Authorities, state institutions are still on a path of consolidation and the risk of undermining that process posed by leading businesspersons linked to the former al-Assad regime has yet to be fully addressed. In light of the ongoing process of transitional justice, the Council should maintain its cautious approach, ensuring continuous support for an inclusive transition that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people.

(11) On the basis of a review of Decision 2013/255/CFSP, the restrictive measures set out therein should be extended until 1 June 2027.

(12) Decision 2013/255/CFSP should therefore be amended accordingly,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

Decision 2013/255/CFSP is amended as follows:

(1) Article 27 is amended as follows:

(a) in paragraph 2, the introductory wording is replaced by the following:

'2. In accordance with the assessments and determinations made by the Council in the context of the situation in Syria as set out in recitals 5 to 12 of Council Decision (CFSP) 2015/1836 (*) and recitals 4 to 10 of Council Decision (CFSP) 2026/1105 (**), Member States shall also take the necessary measures to prevent the entry into, or transit through, their territories of:

(*) Council Decision (CFSP) 2015/1836 of 12 October 2015 amending Decision 2013/255/CFSP concerning restrictive measures against Syria (OJ L 266, 13.10.2015, p. 75, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2015/1836/oj).

(**) Council Decision (CFSP) 2026/1105 of 18 May 2026 amending Decision 2013/255/CFSP concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in Syria (OJ L, 2026/1105, 19.5.2026, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2026/1105/oj).';

(b) paragraph 3 is replaced by the following:

'3. Persons within one of the categories referred to in paragraph 2 shall not be included or retained on the list of persons and entities in Annex I if there is sufficient information that they are not, or are no longer, associated with the former al-Assad regime or do not exercise influence over it or do not pose a real risk of circumvention.';

(2) Article 28 is amended as follows:

(a) in paragraph 2, the introductory wording is replaced by the following:

'2. In accordance with the assessments and determinations made by the Council in the context of the situation in Syria as set out in recitals 5 to 12 of Decision (CFSP) 2015/1836 and recitals 4 to 10 of Decision (CFSP) 2026/1105, all funds and economic resources belonging to, or owned, held or controlled by:';

(b) paragraph 3 is replaced by the following:

'3. Persons, entities or bodies within one of the categories referred to in paragraph 2 shall not be included or retained on the list of persons and entities in Annex I if there is sufficient information that they are not, or are no longer, associated with the former al-Assad regime or do not exercise influence over it or do not pose a real risk of circumvention.';

(3) In Article 34(1), the date '1 June 2026' is replaced by that of '1 June 2027'.

Article 2

This Decision shall enter into force on the day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

Done at Brussels, 18 May 2026.

For the Council

The President

K. KALLAS