Minister Tajani meets with the new Syrian authorities

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Italian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Antonio Tajani is on a mission to Damascus where he met this morning with the Head of the new Syrian administration Ahmed al-Shara and with Minister of Foreign Affairs Hassan al-Shibani. During the day, Minister Tajani will see representatives of the Christian communities in Syria, of civil society and of NGOs, as well as humanitarian workers and a representation of Italian nationals present in the Country.

The meetings enabled Minister Tajani to confirm Italy's commitment to supporting Syria's transition process after the years of civil war and the end of the brutal Assad regime. "I have assured the new authorities and the Syrian people that the Italian Government wants to help support the Country's process of pacification and reconstruction, within the framework of the broader efforts for a stabilisation of the region" concluded Minister Tajani.

The Minister also reminded Syrian interlocutors of the leading role Italy is playing in the transition process, pointing out that the Country is the only G7 member to have an operational embassy in Damascus. This is accompanied by a strong diplomatic engagement, with the organisation yesterday in Rome of a Quintet Minister's meeting and continuous talks with the Regional Partners, most recently with the Ministers of Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

During the meetings, special attention was paid to ways of fostering an inclusive political process that guarantees the fundamental freedoms of all Syrians and recognises and values the role of Christians as citizens with full rights. The security situation and the socio-economic needs of the Country in light of the long civil conflict were also addressed during the talks. Minister Tajani then announced a package of new development cooperation interventions, which will involve Italian civil society organisations. On the topic, it was recalled that Italy has provided for an average annual allocation of more than EUR 40 million for the Syrian population and refugees in neighbouring countries since 2019. Finally, Tajani expressed his willingness to strengthen coordination with international partners and the United Nations, including on the refugee front, in order to facilitate their return to Syria on a voluntary basis and in a safe and dignified manner.

During his mission, the Minister visited the Umayyad Mosque, one of the most symbolic places of Islam, and will also go to the Chapel of St Paul in Damascus.

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