

Press release on the meeting of the High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini with Riad Hijab, chairman of the Syrian High Negotiations Committee

 eeas.europa.eu/delegations/syria/5122/press-release-meeting-high-representativevice-president-federica-mogherini-riad-hijab-chairman_en

Today, the HR/VP met Riad Hijab, the coordinator of the High Negotiations Committee (HNC) appointed by the Syrian opposition at the Conference hosted by the Saudi Arabian Government in Riyadh in early December 2015, along with other representatives of the HNC.

The HR/VP underlined the importance of having the political opposition and associated armed groups uniting behind a common approach in order to participate in the political process and provide a coherent alternative to the Syrian people. She confirmed to Mr Hijab the EU's readiness to support the intra-Syrian talks and provide capacity-building during negotiations and afterwards during the political transition.

As the war continues to rage in Syria, the HR/VP stressed the urgent need to start a political process leading to a peaceful and inclusive transition. We should not miss the opportunity provided by the Vienna talks and UN SCR 2254. Beginning a political process would also be the best way to create the conditions to better manage Syria's security challenges, including the fight against Daesh.

The critical humanitarian situation in Syria was stressed by both parties. The HR/VP confirmed EU leading involvement in supporting the Syrian people, both in Syria and in neighbouring countries. Both sides agreed on the urgency of providing access for humanitarian aid throughout the country, and of ceasing all attacks on and bombing of civilian targets, such as schools and hospitals, and putting an end to sieges of civilian areas. HRVP also insisted on the fact that the implementation of other concrete confidence building measures, in support of the intra-Syrian talks will be critical.

The HR/VP concluded that the EU will continue playing an active role in the International Syria Support Group and is ready to support implementation of the UNSCR 2254, also through assistance to intra-Syrian talks, further support the humanitarian needs of the Syrian people and the reconstruction of their country.

The HR/VP Federica Mogherini also had a meeting with UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura, ahead of the Foreign Affairs Council on Monday 18 January that will discuss Syria and recent developments in the region. The HR/VP reiterated her full support to the efforts of the Special Envoy. They discussed the best ways in which the EU can further actively contribute to the UN-led political process and a ceasefire as outlined in the UN Security Council Resolution 2254, including preparations for negotiations between Syrian government and opposition foreseen to start in Geneva later this month.

