European Commission - Press release

Commission welcomes the suspension of restrictive measures on Syrian key economic sectors

Brussels, 24 February 2025

The Commission welcomes the Council's decision to suspend a number of restrictive measures in view of the situation in Syria. With this decision the EU aims to facilitate engagement with the country, its people and businesses, in key areas such as energy and transport. Today's measures will also allow for financial and banking transactions associated with these sectors, as well as humanitarian and reconstruction purposes.

In addition, the Council decided to **extend indefinitely the humanitarian exemption** to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid in the country. This decision is part of the EU's efforts to support an inclusive political transition in Syria, as well as swift economic recovery, reconstruction, and stability. The EU has adopted a staged and reversible approach to the suspension of restrictive measures, as part of EU's efforts to support a peaceful and inclusive transition.

At the same time, the EU maintained listings related to the Assad regime, the chemical weapons sector, and illicit drug trade. A number of sectoral measures relating to trade in arms, equipment for internal repression, software for interception and surveillance, and the import or export of Syrian cultural heritage goods will also be maintained.

Following up on today's decision, the EU will assess whether further economic sanctions could be suspended. The Commission and EEAS will closely follow the developments in the country, with a view to assessing whether suspensions remain appropriate.

The EU has long stood with Syrians inside Syria and in the neighboring countries mobilizing 35.3 billion EUR since 2011, and remaining, to date, the largest provider of international aid for the Syrian people and their host communities.

In this moment of transition and hope, the Commission continues to stand ready to support the Syrian people. The EU highlights the importance of an inclusive, Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political process that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people. All Syrians, in the country and diaspora, should have the opportunity to participate in the rebuilding of their country.

The EU will convene its **ninth international Conference in support of Syria in Brussels**. The Ministerial event will aim to mobilise the international community in support of a Syrian-owned, inclusive transition and of much needed assistance to the Syrian people. For the first time, Syrian interim authorities have been invited, together with the United Nations, Syria's neighbouring states and other regional partners.

Background

EU sanctions regarding Syria were introduced in 2011 in response to the violent repression against the civilian population in Syria by the Assad regime. EU restrictive measures regarding Syria targeted the regime and its supporters, as well as sectors of the economy from which the regime profited.

After the fall of the Assad regime, and guided by European Council conclusions of 19 December 2024, the EU is in particular considering the steps taken by Syria for an inclusive transition in line with the declarations of the transitional authorities, including accountability for the Assad regime's crimes, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms of all Syrians, without distinction of any kind, respect for the rule of law, and for international law, including the sovereign rights of EU Member States.

For More Information

Link to Official Journal (legal texts will be available tomorrow)

More information on sanctions

IP/25/600

Quote(s):

"There is hope in Syria today to rebuild an inclusive country that reflects Syria in all its diversity. The EU is helping the Syrian people do this today by suspending a number of sanctions on energy, transport and banking and extending the humanitarian exemption indefinitely so humanitarian aid can get into the country. Together with our continued financial support – the EU and Member States are the largest provider of international aid to Syria – these decisions will support Syria's economic recovery and help meet the Syrian people's needs. Following up on today's decision, the EU will assess whether further economic sanctions could be suspended. We will continue to follow developments closely to see not only whether we can lift more economic sanctions but also if we need to reverse our sanctions decisions should the political situation deteriorate."
Kaja Kallas, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission - 24/02/2025

"Today's decision by the Council to lift EU restrictive measures on a number of Syria key economic sectors, including energy and transport as well targeted introduction of provisions to allow for financial and banking transactions is a strong signal of EU efforts to support an inclusive political transition in Syria, along with swift economic recovery, reconstruction, and stability"
Maria Luís Albuquerque, Commissioner for Financial Services and the Savings and Investments Union - 24/02/2025

"I welcome today's decision by the Council to lift EU restrictive measures on key sectors of the Syrian economy. In the current geopolitical context, with the Middle East undergoing a tectonic shift, the EU is determined to contribute to shaping this region of critical importance in terms of security, stability, and economic cooperation. Today's Syria sanctions relief decision reflects the EU's commitment to playing a key role in Syria's reconstruction, revitalizing its economy, and restoring its regional and international standing. At the same time, we underscore the necessity of a credible and inclusive political transition as a foundation for Syria's long-term stability and reconciliation. Our goal is to support the Syrian people in building a more secure, prosperous, and peaceful future."
Dubravka Šuica, Commissioner for Mediterranean - 24/02/2025

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