

PRESS RELEASE

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Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on Syria

The EU welcomes the announcement made by the UN Secretary-General on 23 September of agreement on the formation of a constitutional committee.

The EU has consistently affirmed that any sustainable solution to the conflict requires a genuine political transition as outlined in UN Security Council Resolution 2254 (2015) and the 2012 Geneva Communiqué negotiated by the Syrian parties within the UN-led Geneva process.

The EU therefore looks forward to the inaugural meeting of the committee at the earliest possible opportunity and will monitor developments thereafter most closely. This is a definite step forward, and one that is certainly full of potential.

Meanwhile however the conflict in Idlib persists – following eight years of civil war - as do hostilities in other parts of Syria. Hence the EU equally underlines the urgent need for positive developments in parallel to the work in the constitutional committee. The parties need to engage in confidence-building measures; they need to ensure humanitarian access and full respect for international humanitarian law, and not least, a full and lasting ceasefire must be declared across the whole of Syria. Such measures are important in themselves, but will also help to generate the positive atmosphere necessary to the success of negotiations between the Syrian parties.

The EU underscores the importance of ensuring conditions propitious to the safe, voluntary and dignified return of refugees and internally displaced persons.

To recall, the EU will be ready to assist in the reconstruction of Syria when a comprehensive, genuine and inclusive political transition, in the framework of UNSCR 2254 and the Geneva process, is firmly under way.

The EU stands ready and willing to support the developing peace process in Syria in whatever way it can, in close conjunction and coordination with the UN Special Envoy.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, Republic of North Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia* and Albania* and the EFTA countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia align themselves with this declaration.

*Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

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