Syria: Statement by High Representative/Vice-President Borrell and Commissioner Lenarčič on the cross-border humanitarian deliveries

Brussels, 12 July 2023

The European Union deplores the veto by the Russian Federation in the UN Security Council on 11 July 2023 on the renewal of the United Nation Security Council Resolution 2672 (2023) regarding cross-border delivery of humanitarian assistance to people in Northwest Syria. The non-renewal of UNSCR 2672 as a result of the Russian veto will further exacerbate the already dire humanitarian situation in northwest Syria and will gravely disrupt the delivery of life-saving humanitarian supplies to millions in need. The European Union is deeply concerned about the impact of this decision and the further politicisation of humanitarian assistance to people in desperate need. The European Union calls on the Security Council to undertake every effort to find a solution that will enable cross-border assistance to continue.

As there is no adequate alternative to the UN-coordinated mechanism, the halting of cross-border delivery will lead to the loss of the only lifeline for more than 4 million people living in Northwest Syria, including almost 3 million internally displaced persons. This will cause further unnecessary suffering to the Syrian people, that are affected by more than decade of conflict and the consequences of a devastating earthquake. We urge the Russian Federation not to unnecessarily exacerbate the suffering of millions of Syrian people.

While the European Union welcomes the extension of the opening of the Bab al-Salam and Al-Ra'ee crossing points until 13 August 2023, it recalls that this short-term bilateral agreement does not provide stable access for humanitarian organisations to plan and deliver in a timely and efficient manner assistance in Northwest Syria.

The European Union will continue to do its utmost to provide much-needed life-saving humanitarian assistance to those in need in Northwest Syria through all the available modalities, which however cannot replace the lifeline provided by the UN-coordinated cross-border humanitarian assistance.

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Press contacts:

Nabila MASSRALI (+32 2 298 80 93)
Balazs UJVARI (+32 2 295 45 78)
Gioia FRANCHELLUCCI (+32 2 29 68041)

General public inquiries: Europe Direct by phone 00 800 67 89 10 11 or by email