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Subject: Council conclusions on the ISIL / Da'esh crisis in Syria and Iraq

Delegations will find attached the Council conclusions on the ISIL / Da'esh crisis in Syria and Iraq, as adopted by the Council on 20 October 2014.

**COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON
THE ISIL / DA'ESH CRISIS IN SYRIA AND IRAQ
Foreign Affairs Council, 20 October 2014**

1. The EU is seriously concerned about the humanitarian and security situation in Syria and Iraq and condemns unreservedly the attacks, atrocities, killings and abuses of human rights perpetrated by ISIL / Da'esh and other terrorist groups in both countries as well as by the Assad regime in Syria. The EU is determined to contribute to the international endeavour to defeat those terrorist groups. A Syrian led political transition and inclusive political governance in Iraq are crucial to sustainable peace and stability in the region.
2. The situation in Ayn al Arab / Kobani and in other areas under siege and experiencing fierce fighting against ISIL / Da'esh is a matter of serious concern. The EU appreciates efforts by Turkey to shelter refugees from Kobani and calls on Turkey to open its border for any supply for the people of Kobani.
3. The EU is committed to tackling in a comprehensive and coordinated manner the regional threat posed by terrorism and violent extremism and addressing the underlying instability and violence which has given ISIL / Da'esh and other terrorist groups a foothold. The EU supports efforts by more than sixty States to tackle the threat from ISIL / Da'esh, including military action in accordance with international law. It notes that military action in this context is necessary but not sufficient to defeat ISIL / Da'esh and it is part of a wider effort comprising measures in the political/diplomatic, counter-terrorism and terrorism funding, humanitarian and communication field. The EU calls on all partners to enforce relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions, including 2170 and 2178 and to step up efforts at national level to deny ISIL / Da'esh the benefits of illicit oil sales and other goods.

Non-inclusive policies in Iraq, and instability in Syria caused by the Assad regime's brutal war against its own people, massive human rights violations and systematic obstruction against democratic reforms, have allowed ISIL / Da'esh to flourish. As a consequence of its policies and actions, the Assad regime cannot be a partner in the fight against ISIL / Da'esh.

4. The EU approved today further sanctions against the Assad regime, designating individuals and entities linked to the regime to be subject to restrictive measures. The Council also agreed today to impose an export ban on jet fuel and relevant additives being exported to Syria as they are being used by the Assad regime's air force, which undertakes indiscriminate air attacks against civilians. The EU will continue its policy of imposing additional measures targeting the regime, as long as repression continues.
5. The EU reiterates its firm commitment to counter the serious problem of foreign fighters who have joined the ranks of ISIL / Da'esh and other terrorist groups. The Council endorses the EU counter terrorism / foreign fighters strategy, which is an integral part of the response to the August 2014 European Council Conclusions and to United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2170 and 2178. The Council calls for its well-coordinated implementation as a matter of highest priority. The EU is determined to take immediate and long term action to deny ISIL / Da'esh the benefits of its sources of funding and supply, and to enhance its counter terrorism and security cooperation with countries neighbouring Syria and Iraq in line with the EU counter terrorism / foreign fighters strategy. The EU supports the work undertaken by the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator in this regard.
6. International efforts to achieve a Syrian-led transition remain a priority in order to maintain the country's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity while preserving its multi-ethnic and multi-religious character. The EU will continue to provide political and practical support to the moderate opposition. There cannot be lasting peace in Syria if the legitimate grievances of all ordinary Syrians, including those belonging to ethnic and religious groups, are not addressed. The EU is determined to support all efforts for a political solution by mutual consent based on the Geneva Communiqué of 30 June 2012 and in line with relevant UNSC

Resolutions. The EU calls on all parties to engage constructively in negotiations and it expresses its full support to the UN special envoy Staffan de Mistura and his ongoing efforts. The EU recognises that the active engagement of regional and international actors will be required to deliver a viable transition and calls on them to play a constructive role in this regard.

7. The EU is appalled by and firmly condemns the indiscriminate killings, human rights abuses, including systematic sexual and gender based violence, perpetrated in Syria and Iraq by ISIL / Da'esh and other terrorist organisations, in particular against Christian and other religious and ethnic groups, women and children.

The EU reiterates also its condemnation of the gross, widespread and systematic violations of human rights and international humanitarian law by the Assad regime.

The EU is seriously concerned about the human rights abuses and sectarian violence that are being committed in Iraq.

8. The EU welcomes the 8th report of the independent international Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic published on 27 August 2014. The EU strongly condemns the actions of ISIL / Da'esh amounting to crimes against humanity and war crimes. The EU recalls that all responsible for abuses and violations of human rights and international humanitarian law must be held accountable and that there can be no impunity for them. The EU reiterates its call to the Security Council to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court and its call of Iraq to accede to the Rome Statute. The EU welcomes efforts by actors working on the ground to ensure that human rights abuses and violations are being documented and evidence preserved.

9. The EU welcomes the formation of a new Iraqi government on 8 September and its commitment to address current challenges by pursuing inclusive policies which meet the needs and aspirations of all components of Iraqi society. Failure to do so may compromise efforts to combat ISIL/Da'esh, hamper the government's efforts to promote Iraq's national reconciliation, and further intensify sectarian tensions. It welcomes the appointment to the key posts of defence and interior ministers, as well as the other ministerial appointments and the fact that the Kurdish ministers have taken up their posts in the government. It calls on the Iraqi government and the government of the Kurdistan Region to find a lasting solution to their differences.
10. The EU reiterates its firm commitment to Iraq's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity. It welcomes the coalition's efforts, including the decision by individual Member States to provide military material and expertise to Iraq, to reduce ISIL/Da'esh's capacity to attack civilian populations, which come in response to an explicit request for support by the Iraqi government. Ultimately, however, the solution to the crisis can only be political. It calls on the government to reach out to all components of Iraq society and to pursue, without delay, a process of national reconciliation. The EU urges all components of Iraqi society to unite in the fight against ISIL/Daesh and to support a process of national reconciliation.
11. The EU expresses its readiness to closely cooperate with the Government of Iraq in addressing its challenges, and to support it in pursuing the necessary reforms across a broad spectrum of sectors, including the security sector and the judicial system which need to be reinforced along non-sectarian lines, in cooperation with UNAMI and in compliance with Iraq's international obligations, in order to enhance good governance and rule of law.
12. The EU welcomes the various and complementary initiatives taken on Iraq, in particular the conclusions of the Conference on Peace and Security in Iraq held in Paris on 15 September, as well as the UNSC meeting on Iraq held on 19 September. The EU calls on countries in the region and the international community to work together to help Iraq tackle its sectarian tensions and restore peace and stability.

13. The EU is deeply concerned, particularly in view of the approach of winter, by the humanitarian predicament of the millions of Syrians and Iraqis who have been forcibly displaced both internally and to neighbouring countries. The EU and its Member States are leading the international response to the crisis. To date, around €2.9 billion has been mobilised for relief and recovery assistance to those in need in Syria and Iraq as well as to refugees and their host communities. The EU will continue to support the humanitarian relief efforts, including for people in areas that are difficult to reach, provide assistance to support the resilience of refugees and host communities in countries affected by the crisis and calls on the international community to do the same. It will also continue to insist on the importance of abiding by humanitarian principles and international human rights law.

Regarding Syria, the EU condemns the Assad regime's continued intransigence on humanitarian access and the use of administrative procedures to hinder the rapid and sustained delivery of aid. The EU reiterates its call on all parties, in particular the Assad regime to implement in full the provisions of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2139 and 2165. The EU will continue to implement those Resolutions to deliver cross-border and cross line assistance. The EU is also deeply concerned that ISIL has significantly affected the presence and operation of humanitarian agencies and actors in northern Syria, thus compromising their humanitarian function.

Regarding Iraq, the EU calls on the government of Iraq to do more to contribute to the humanitarian relief effort across the country and deliver on its duty of care and protection vis-à-vis all Iraqis.

14. In all the neighbouring countries hosting Iraqi and Syrian refugees, the EU will continue to provide assistance to refugees and vulnerable host communities in close coordination with national authorities and development actors, whose efforts contribute to reducing tensions with host communities and to the stabilization of these countries in line with their national plans.

The EU is fully aware of the immense social and security challenges that the current developments in Syria and Iraq pose in particular to Lebanon and Jordan. The EU is determined to seek ways to further enhance its support to both countries to meet those security challenges.

The EU is looking forward to the Berlin Conference on the Syrian Refugee Situation of 28 October 2014.

15. The Council calls on the High Representative/Vice President to develop an EU comprehensive regional strategy for Syria and Iraq as well as the ISIL / Da'esh threat.
