



Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 19 July 2024
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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: Syria -
Request by the Italian Delegation for an AOB item on behalf of Austria,
Cyprus, Czech Republic, Greece, Croatia, Italy, Slovakia and Slovenia

Delegations will find in the annex a note from the Italian Delegation on behalf of Austria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Greece, Croatia, Italy, Slovakia and Slovenia concerning Syria. The topic will be included as an “Any other business” item on the agenda for the Foreign Affairs Council on 22 July 2024.

**AOB item requested by Italy on behalf of Austria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Greece, Croatia,
Italy, Slovakia and Slovenia for the FAC**

(22 July 2024)

1. Austria, Cyprus, Croatia, Czech Republic, Greece, Italy, Slovakia and Slovenia will refer to their proposal to open a review process of the 2017 EU Strategy on Syria, as anticipated in a joint letter the eight Ministers sent to the HRVP Borrell on July 15. A first contribution to the discussion was offered in a non-paper presented in the PSC meeting of July 16.
2. The aim of the initiative is to start an open and constructive debate to identify what is still valid of the 2017 Strategy and which updated common lines could be necessary to feed a better and united EU position to this long-lasting crisis at Europe's doorstep. A crisis that is still causing an immense suffering to millions of Syrians, that has direct impact on many MS and puts a huge strain on neighboring countries of strategic importance to the EU, like Lebanon.
3. From a political point of view, without neglecting the responsibilities of the Assad regime, MS should reflect on how the EU can play a more effective political role in this crisis and how to make best use of the EUs instruments.
4. From the humanitarian perspective, MS need to assess whether the EU extraordinary humanitarian effort could be more effective, taking into account the problems posed by sanctions' over-compliance and red lines' over-interpretation.
5. The review process of the Strategy should be based on an assessment by the EEAS. Furthermore, the review should take into account the views and expertise of the European Commission as well as relevant humanitarian actors on the ground.