



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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From: Council

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Subject: Council conclusions on Syria

Delegations will find attached the Council conclusions on Syria, as adopted by the Council on 10 December 2012.

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON SYRIA

1. Recalling its previous Council Conclusions, the EU is appalled by the increasingly deteriorating situation in Syria, primarily due to the unprecedented use of force by the regime. The EU condemns the recent attacks on an UNDOF convoy in which four peace-keepers have been wounded. It also condemns all attacks, including the recent terrorist acts, that indiscriminately targeted civilians. The current situation is unsustainable and does not allow for the adequate protection of civilians, in particular vulnerable groups and religious communities. The EU is seriously concerned about the potential use and transfer of chemical weapons in Syria and reminds the Syrian regime and other parties that, in case of their use, those responsible will be held accountable. The EU remains deeply concerned by the spill-over effects of the Syrian crisis in neighbouring countries. It remains committed to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Syria.
2. The EU reiterates its full support to the efforts of the Joint Special Representative of the UN and the League of Arab States, Lakhdar Brahimi in finding a political solution to the crisis based on the principles included in the Geneva Communiqué of 30 June 2012. The EU takes note of the proposals made by Brahimi in his briefing to the UN Security Council on 29 November 2012. The EU continues to call on all members of the UN Security Council to uphold their responsibilities.
3. The Council welcomes the opportunity it had today to exchange views with Moaz Al-Khatib, President of the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces which the EU accepts as legitimate representatives of the Syrian people. The EU welcomes the efforts made by the Coalition in its meeting in Cairo on 28 – 29 November to set up its structures and to become more operational and inclusive. The EU encourages the Coalition to continue working on these goals and to remain committed to the respect of the principles of human rights, inclusivity, democracy and engaging with all opposition groups and all sections of Syrian civil society. The EU encourages the Coalition to engage with the UN/LAS Special Representative and to put forward its programme for a political transition with a view to creating a credible alternative to the current regime. The EU stands ready to continue engaging with and to support the Coalition in these endeavours and its relations with the international community at large.

4. The EU looks forward to the meeting of the Group of Friends of the Syrian People on 12 December in Marrakesh to maintain international pressure on the Syrian regime and reaffirm its support to the Syrian people's aspirations for democracy.
5. The EU reiterates its call on all parties to the conflict to facilitate humanitarian access and aid delivery to the people in need, to ensure the neutrality of humanitarian aid and to abide by International Humanitarian Law. It also reiterates its demand for the specific protection provided to medical personnel and facilities. The EU urges all parties to guarantee the safe passage and protection of civilians, especially of women and children that have been displaced as a result of the violence. The EU supports the international humanitarian response under the leadership and coordination of the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator. The EU continues to support affected populations inside Syria and in neighbouring countries. The EU is increasing its humanitarian assistance as the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate dramatically. The EU calls on all other donors to further enhance their response to urgent needs, focusing on lifesaving humanitarian operations and to enhance their efforts to meet urgent humanitarian needs through increased humanitarian contributions, in coordination with the UN and in line with humanitarian principles.
6. The EU welcomes the adoption by the 3rd Committee of the UNGA of the Resolution on the situation of human rights in Syria. The EU also denounces the recent limitations to the use of telecommunications and Internet in Syria and considers of primary importance that unhindered access to all media, including the Internet, is guaranteed.

The EU remains deeply concerned about the widespread and systematic violations of human rights and international humanitarian law which, according to the Independent International Commission of Inquiry, may amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes under the Rome Statute of International Criminal Court. The EU recalls that all those responsible for such crimes must be held accountable and that there should be no impunity for such violations and abuses. The EU has repeatedly stated that, if concerns about war crimes and crimes against humanity are not adequately addressed on a national level, the International Criminal Court should deal with the situation. The United Nations Security Council can refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court at any time. The EU calls on the United Nations Security Council to urgently address the situation in Syria in all aspects, including this issue.

7. The EU reiterates its support in strengthening the capacity of civil society organisations and stresses their importance for the building of the future democratic Syria.

The EU also acknowledges the importance of supporting local civilian structures throughout Syria.

8. The EU will continue working closely and comprehensively with international partners on planning to ensure the international community is ready to provide rapid support to Syria once transition takes place. As soon as a genuine democratic transition begins, the EU stands ready to develop a new and ambitious partnership with Syria across all areas of mutual interest.
