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'I/A' ITEM NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee/Council
Subject:	Council Decision, Regulation and Implementing Regulation concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in Syria

Syria – Council Declaration

Today, the Council decided to suspend a number of restrictive measures in view of the situation in Syria, in order to facilitate engagement with the country, its people and businesses in areas of energy, transport and reconstruction, as well as to facilitate the associated financial and banking transactions. The Council also decided to extend indefinitely the humanitarian exemption to further facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid in the country. This decision is part of the European Union's efforts to support an inclusive political transition in Syria, as well as swift economic recovery, reconstruction, and stabilisation of Syria. As a part of a gradual approach and in a next step, the Council will assess whether further restrictive measures could be suspended.

EU restrictive measures have been used as a tool against the Al-Assad regime, responsible for the violent repression of the Syrian civil population. The fall of the Al-Assad regime marks the beginning of a new era of hope for the Syrian people. All Syrians, in the country and diaspora, should have the opportunity to participate in the rebuilding of their country. The EU stands with the Syrian people in this moment of transition.

The Council will continue to examine whether the suspensions remain appropriate, based on the close monitoring of the situation in the country. In this context, the Council's assessment will be guided, *inter alia*, by European Council conclusions of 19 December 2024 and it will consider the steps taken by Syria for an inclusive transition in line with the declarations of the transitional authorities, including accountability for the Al-Assad regime's crimes, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms of all Syrians without distinction of any kind, and rule of law and international law. In this regard, the Council will pay particular attention to the respect of international law and the rights of Member States, including Member States' sovereign rights in accordance with international law as reflected in UNCLOS. In the spirit of good neighbourly relations, it is paramount, that the transitional government in Syria fulfils its role in ensuring harmonious co-existence between Syria and its neighbours, based on mutual respect, sovereignty and respect for territorial integrity. The Council highlights the importance of a Syrian-led political process and calls for an end to interference in the country of destabilising foreign actors, recalling the respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of Syria.

At the same time, the Council agrees that listings related to the Al-Assad regime, the chemical weapons sector and illicit drug trade as well as a number of sectoral measures, such as on arms trade, dual-use goods, equipment for internal repression, software for interception and surveillance, and the import/export of Syrian cultural heritage goods should be maintained.

In this moment of hope, the Council reiterates the EU's commitment to support the Syrian people.