



Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 30 March 2015
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LIMITE

PE-QE 155

REPLY TO PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Permanent Representations of the Member States

Subject: PRELIMINARY DRAFT REPLY TO QUESTION FOR WRITTEN ANSWER
E-001665/2015 - Neena Gill (S&D)
Humanitarian crisis in Syria - implementation and strengthening of UN
Security Council (UNSC) resolutions calling for cross-border humanitarian
aid

1. Delegations will find attached:
 - the text of the above question for written answer;
 - a preliminary draft reply prepared by the General Secretariat.
2. If no comments have been received from delegations by 15 April 2015 (17.00), this preliminary draft reply will be submitted to the Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 1) and to the Council for approval.

Any comments received will be examined by the Working Party on General Affairs.

**Question for written answer E-001665/2015
to the Council**
Rule 130
Neena Gill (S&D)

Subject: Humanitarian crisis in Syria - implementation and strengthening of UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions calling for cross-border humanitarian aid

Over 12.2 million Syrians are currently going without food, water or medical care and are in dire need of humanitarian assistance.

Meanwhile, despite UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2165 and subsequent resolutions authorising cross-border humanitarian assistance, the Syrian regime is reported to be continuing its obstruction of humanitarian aid in strategic areas in a blatant violation of international humanitarian law.

Latvia's Secretary of State for European Affairs stated in a recent meeting with Parliament's Development Committee that the Latvian Presidency's priorities in the humanitarian sphere include helping to resolve the humanitarian crisis in Syria.

1. What steps does the Council intend to take to ensure compliance by the Assad regime with UNSC resolution provisions that allow for cross-border humanitarian assistance?
2. Would the Council consider opportune a strengthening of the mandate of resolution UNSC 2165 by including additional border crossings that should be opened for humanitarian aid, to ensure that all people trapped behind conflict lines and across borders receive humanitarian relief?

In its conclusions of 16 March 2015¹, the Council noted with serious concern that humanitarian needs continue to rise while access to vulnerable people faces an increasing number of constraints. The Council condemned the Assad regime's continued intransigence on humanitarian access and the use of administrative procedures to hinder the rapid and sustained delivery of aid, including medical material. The Council reiterated its call on all parties, in particular the Assad regime to implement in full the provisions of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2139, 2165 and 2191. The EU actively supported the adoption of Resolution 2191 which authorised use of the border crossings at Bab al-Salam, Bab al-Hawa, Al Yarubiyah and Al-Ramtha in addition to those already in use as originally authorized by resolution 2165. The EU will seek to scale up the implementation of those Resolutions to deliver cross-border and cross line assistance in order to help those Syrians most desperately in need. The Council condemned also the continued sieges of civilians and recalled the regime's primary responsibility for ensuring the protection of its own population. The Council expressed deep concern that ISIL/Da'esh has significantly affected the presence and operation of humanitarian agencies and actors in northern Syria, thus compromising their humanitarian function.

¹ <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/03/16-council-conclusions-eu-regional-strategy-for-syria-and-iraq-as-well-as-the-isil-daesh-threat/>