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'I/A' ITEM NOTE

From:	Political and Security Committee
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee/Council
Subject:	Council Conclusions on Syria

1. At its meeting on 17 June 2025, the Political and Security Committee agreed the draft Council conclusions on Syria, as set out in the Annex.
2. COREPER is therefore invited to confirm the agreement on the draft Council conclusions on Syria and to transmit them to the Council for approval.

Draft Council conclusions on Syria

1. The fall of the criminal Assad regime marks a historic moment for the Syrian people, who have endured immense suffering and demonstrated remarkable resilience in their pursuit of dignity, freedom, democracy and justice over the past fourteen years. All Syrians should have the chance to finally reunify, stabilise and rebuild their country, restore justice and ensure accountability, turning a new page in the history of Syria. In this critical period, the European Union continues to stand with the Syrian people and is committed to supporting a peaceful and inclusive, Syrian-led and Syrian-owned transition to help build a better future for all Syrians.

2. The European Union welcomes the commitment by Interim President Ahmed Al-Sharaa and the transitional government to build a new Syria based on national reconciliation, rule of law, separation of powers, as well as human rights and fundamental freedoms for all Syrians without distinction, fully safeguarding the diversity of the country. We also take positive note of the initial steps taken over the last months to lay the groundwork for a peaceful and inclusive transition, including the holding of a first National Dialogue Conference, the adoption of a Constitutional Declaration, and the appointment of a transitional government. The EU calls for these initial steps and commitments, as well as the key principles enshrined in the Constitutional Declaration, to be fully implemented and put into effect, for the National Dialogue to continue, for the swift formation of the People's Assembly and the drafting of a permanent Constitution both responding to the aspirations of all Syrians, and for genuine elections to be held within three to five years as envisaged in line with international standards, allowing for the full political participation of all Syrians. The EU also calls on the transitional government to work towards the establishment of strong, independent judicial institutions. The EU stands ready to support the transitional government in these endeavours.

3. Human rights and fundamental freedoms must be respected, protected and fulfilled for everyone in Syria, without discrimination of any kind. Women have a fundamental role to play in the new Syria, and the EU continues to call upon the authorities to ensure their full, equal and meaningful participation in all spheres of political life and society.

4. The EU continues to call for an immediate end to violence across Syria. The EU was gravely alarmed by the widespread violence in Syria's coastal region and in other areas around Damascus in spring 2025. The EU strongly condemns the attacks by all sides as well as the horrific crimes committed against civilians. The EU calls on the transitional authorities to maintain order, ensure

control over armed groups, protect all Syrians, regardless of their ethnic or religious background, and hold all perpetrators accountable, in line with international law, norms and standards. The EU welcomes the response by the transitional authorities, and in particular the establishment of an investigative committee, and calls for a swift, transparent, credible and impartial investigation, as well as for a transparent and victim-centred follow-up process. The relevant UN mechanisms should be allowed to also investigate these crimes. The EU condemns any form of harmful foreign interference aimed at spoiling national reconciliation.

5. Syrian civil society, free and independent media, and the Syrian diaspora community have a crucial role to play to ensure the success of Syria's transition in building a peaceful, just, inclusive and pluralistic society. The EU calls on the transitional government to protect civic space by ensuring a safe and enabling environment for local and international civil society and independent media, free from threats, intimidation and administrative hurdles. The EU and its Member States will maintain their longstanding engagement with, and support to, Syrian civil society.

6. Syria's transition and reconstruction will require long-term sustained efforts. The EU is engaging with the transitional government and works closely with regional and international partners to that aim, and calls upon the international community to intensify its support, both political and financial, building upon the principles set out in Aqaba (14 December 2024), Riyadh (12 January 2025), Paris (13 February 2025), and Brussels (17 March 2025) as well as the pledges announced at the Brussels IX Conference. The international community, including the United Nations system and its different agencies as well as the donor coordination initiatives of the EU, can make a significant contribution to supporting Syria's political transition, transitional justice, reconciliation, socio-economic recovery and reconstruction, based on the spirit of the key principles of UNSCR 2254. The EU continues to support the work of the UN Special Envoy for Syria and the UN team in Syria in this respect. The provision of basic services as well as livelihood opportunities for the Syrian population are a precondition for a stable and peaceful Syria. The EU calls on the international community to facilitate Syria's economic recovery and to work on its reintegration into the international financial system.

7. The EU calls on all actors in Syria to uphold international law, including human rights law. The EU continues to strongly support Syrian and international efforts towards accountability for all atrocities, committed mainly by the Assad regime and by other parties, such as Daesh and other terrorist or armed groups, during or since the Assad regime. A comprehensive and inclusive transitional justice process, Syrian-led and Syrian-owned, is a necessity for reconciliation and lasting peace. All those responsible for grave breaches of international humanitarian, criminal and human

rights law must be held accountable and brought to justice, including when necessary with the support of third states and intergovernmental organisations. It is also fundamental for the transitional government to work together with other Syrian and international stakeholders to uncover the fate of all the estimated 150,000 persons gone missing, without discrimination. In this respect, the EU welcomes the establishment of the National Authority for Transitional Justice and of the National Authority for Missing Persons as an important step towards comprehensive justice and truth, which the Syrian people deserve and stands ready to support them. The EU acknowledges the essential contribution of civil society actors, including the associations of victims and family members. The EU will also continue to be a staunch supporter of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism, the Commission of Inquiry, and the Independent Institution on Missing Persons in the Syrian Arab Republic. The EU welcomes the transitional government's initial cooperation with these actors, as well as with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and other relevant organisations such as the ICRC, and calls for them to be granted full access across Syria to fulfil their mandates. The EU stands ready to support mediation and reconciliation efforts at local and national level. The EU encourages the universal accession to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and invites the Syrian Arab Republic to consider accepting its jurisdiction.

8. The disarmament, demobilisation and re-integration (DDR) of all armed groups into unified national security forces is a prerequisite for internal security and political stability under the rule of law. These efforts should ensure that all terrorist and violent extremist elements are excluded. This DDR process should be part of a wider and robust effort of security sector reform (SSR), ensuring a security sector that is accountable, transparent, professional and which operates in accordance with international law. In this respect, the EU recognises the initial efforts made by the transitional authorities and welcomes the agreement reached on 10 March 2025 between them and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), as well as similar efforts throughout the country. The EU now calls on the parties to work on a swift, comprehensive and peaceful implementation of the agreement. The EU stands ready to support, alongside other partners, the security sector reform process.

9. The EU commends the transitional government's statements vowing to develop peaceful relations with all countries and to fully respect international law, including UNCLOS. The EU is ready to engage with the transitional government in regional and multilateral fora, including to promote effective multilateralism and a rules-based international order with the United Nations at its core. The EU calls on Syria, as on all states, to voice their position against military aggression and territorial annexation in line with the principles of the UN Charter. The EU recalls the importance of positive

votes in the UN General Assembly condemning Russia's aggression against Ukraine and in seeking to reach a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine. Moreover, the EU condemns the decisions by Assad's regime recognising the violation of sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and Georgia and calls on the transitional authorities to revoke these decisions based on the respect of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states. The EU reiterates that, in line with the international law and the UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 497, the EU does not recognise Israeli sovereignty over the occupied Golan Heights.

10. The EU urges all external actors without exception to fully respect Syria's unity, independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. The EU condemns any unilateral foreign military actions and presence as well as attempts to undermine Syria's stability and prospects for a peaceful transition, including through foreign information manipulation and interference. In this regard, the EU remains seriously concerned by the actions of Russia and Iran, the main accomplices of the Assad regime's brutal repression against its people, aiming to once again fuel violence and destabilise Syria. While Israel's security concerns should be addressed, the EU is deeply concerned by the strikes by the Israeli Defense Forces in several regions, and their continued presence and military operations, notably in Southern Syria. The EU calls on Israel to respect the demilitarized buffer zone and to uphold the terms of the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement. The EU remains concerned about involvement of Turkish-backed armed groups in the north of the country. Türkiye's security concerns should be addressed while ensuring all Syrians – including Kurds – can enjoy security and fundamental rights.

11. The fight against Daesh and other terrorist groups, which continue to pose a threat to Syria, to the region, to Europe and to international peace and security, remains a priority amidst a rapidly evolving political and security context. The EU calls on the transitional government to pursue the fight against international terrorism, in particular Daesh and Al-Qaeda affiliates, including by engaging with the Global Coalition against Daesh. The EU also underlines the need to decisively address the threat posed by all foreign terrorist fighters in Syria. The EU has been a committed partner to the Global Coalition against Daesh and, as co-lead of its Core Focus Group, will play a more active role to ensure the enduring defeat of terrorism and to prevent the resurgence of terrorist groups. The need to maintain the secure operation of facilities holding Daesh affiliates and their families in North-East Syria is a regional and global security issue that requires collective efforts. The EU, together with its Member States, is committed to increasing its support to the secure operations of camps and detention facilities in North-East Syria and calls on international partners to remain engaged, increase their funding and work towards sustainable solutions. The EU encourages the Global Coalition against

Daesh, international partners and the transitional government to work towards the deradicalisation, rehabilitation and re-integration of the Syrian citizens currently in al-Hol and al-Roj camps, and to supporting the prosecution of those suspected of committing or facilitating acts of terrorism.

12. The EU welcomes the transitional government's cooperation with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and calls on the transitional government to ensure swift implementation of the next steps to eliminate Syria's chemical weapons programme for good and to counter proliferation risks. The EU will continue to actively support the OPCW's activities including through financial support, with a view to investigating, securing and fully destroying all chemical weapons in Syria, including production facilities, and urges others to do the same. The EU welcomes the transitional government's cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and calls on the transitional government to engage with the IAEA, ensuring the full implementation of Syria's NPT Safeguards Agreement and to provide clarification of the pending issues related to past activities. The EU encourages Syria to conclude and bring into force an Additional Protocol without further delay. The EU will continue to actively support the IAEA's activities, as well as its impartiality and independence.

13. Combating the production and the trafficking of narcotics, such as Captagon, and the related organized crime networks is essential. We welcome the actions of the transitional government, in particular the destruction of several drug production facilities, and encourage it to develop a sustainable strategy to prevent the resumption of Captagon production, in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and European and regional partners.

14. The EU is alarmed by the continued catastrophic humanitarian situation in Syria, with 90 percent of Syrians living below the poverty line, 16.5 million Syrians relying on humanitarian aid, over 7.2 million people internally displaced, including over 2 million in camps with scarce access to basic services such as food and water, and over 5 million refugees mainly hosted in neighbouring countries as well as in the EU. The food security situation continues to deteriorate, the healthcare system is in ruins, access to basic services remains extremely limited, including due to continued hostilities with attacks on critical infrastructure. The country is littered with unexploded ordnance and landmines, hindering safe return and reconstruction and putting lives of civilians, including vulnerable groups, women and children, in danger. The EU recalls the need to respect International Humanitarian Law, to guarantee unhindered and sustained humanitarian access and to ensure the protection of civilians, humanitarian workers, and civilian infrastructure at all times. The EU will continue to play a leading role in humanitarian funding, following a needs-based approach in line with humanitarian principles,

in all of Syria, while complementing its emergency response with early recovery assistance. Humanitarian aid should be complemented by long-term and development investments as well as reconstruction, providing for a more sustainable recovery and stabilisation of the country, as well as for a stronger resilience of the Syrian people through strengthening cooperation between populations and local authorities. The EU is particularly alarmed by the status of critical infrastructure throughout Syria, specifically concerning the health, water and electricity sectors. Since the beginning of the crisis in 2011, the EU has responded to the most urgent life-saving needs and protection concerns of the most vulnerable. When Syria was affected by the earthquake in 2023, the EU activated the EU Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) and European Humanitarian Response Capacity (EHRC), in addition to humanitarian aid.

15. The EU, together with its Member States, has been consistently leading in providing assistance to Syrians and remains steadfast in its commitment to support Syrian people. Over the past fourteen years, the EU and its Member States have mobilised nearly EUR 37 billion in humanitarian, development, economic and stabilisation assistance, supporting Syrians both inside the country and across the region. The EU remains committed to supporting Syria on its path towards stabilisation and reconstruction, across priorities such as institution building and public reform, socio-economic recovery (livelihoods and jobs, support to key sectors such as agriculture, provision of basic services such as water, waste-water, health and electricity), social cohesion, human rights, transitional justice and the protection of the rich cultural heritage of the country. The EU emphasises the importance of empowering young people, especially women and girls, by providing them with opportunities for education, skills development, and active participation in public life and socio-economic recovery efforts. The EU's support to socio-economic recovery and reconstruction will be commensurate with developments in the country and the actions of the transitional government. The EU urges the international community to step up its assistance. Building on the Brussels IX Conference on 17 March 2025, in which the EU and the international community raised a total amount of EUR 5.8 billion in pledges for the coming two years, including EUR 3.37 billion from the EU and its Member States, the EU intends to further coordinate with key contributors on Syria's reconstruction, including international financial institutions and regional partners, to ensure the complementarity of international efforts. The EU supports ongoing efforts from the international financial institutions to assess Syria's needs and their renewed cooperation with the transitional government. The Council invites the European Investment Bank to resume its activity in Syria in view of supporting these efforts.

16. In May the EU lifted all its remaining economic sanctions on Syria with the aim to support Syria's inclusive political transition, as well as its swift economic recovery, reconstruction, and stabilisation, in line with a gradual and reversible approach. The EU maintains sanctions related to the Assad regime in line with its call for accountability as well as sanctions based on security grounds. In parallel, the EU introduced additional sanctions against human rights violators and those fuelling instability in Syria. In this context, the EU recalls the Council statement on the lifting of EU economic sanctions from 20 May 2025.

17. The fall of the Assad regime has created an immense hope to return home among millions of Syrian refugees, including in EU Member States, and among internally displaced persons. The EU takes note of the transitional government's statements referring to the return of Syrian refugees in appropriate conditions as a key objective. The EU also takes note of the statements by UNHCR that conditions in Syria currently do not allow for large-scale voluntary repatriations to Syria, given the humanitarian, economic and security situation. Meanwhile, the EU is committed to helping to create the conditions for safe, dignified, voluntary and sustainable returns to Syria and stands ready to support those who voluntarily wish to return. It is key to ensure that the asylum space for refugees is maintained and the principle of *non-refoulement* is respected. The EU remains committed to strengthening protection monitoring, follow-up, support and services for displaced persons or new returnees in Syria - notably with UNHCR. The EU commends the efforts of neighbouring countries hosting Syrian refugees for over a decade of conflict, and reaffirms its commitment to maintain its support to refugees and host communities so that their resilience is strengthened. In this context, EU Member states may also continue to assess the possibility of allowing 'go-and-see visits' during which international protection is not revoked.

18. The EU will ensure a stronger, permanent diplomatic presence in Damascus as soon as possible through the full reactivation of the Delegation of the EU.