



EUROPEAN COUNCIL



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## **SYRIA**

### **Extract from the European Council conclusions**

"The European Council is appalled by the situation in Syria and endorses the Council Conclusions of 27 February 2012. In line with the United Nations Human Rights Council resolution of 1 March, it demands that Syrian authorities immediately stop the massive violence and human rights abuses inflicted to the civilian population. The European Council remains determined to ensure that those responsible for the atrocities being committed in Syria are held accountable for their actions and will coordinate closely with and assist those working to document these appalling crimes. The European Council confirms its commitment to further increasing the pressure on the Syrian regime as long as the violence and human rights abuses continue, and invites the Council to prepare further targeted restrictive measures against the regime. It calls on president Assad to step aside to make room for a peaceful transition for the sake of the country. As soon as a democratic transition begins, the EU is ready to develop a new partnership and provide assistance.

The European Council reiterates the importance of full and unhindered access for independent humanitarian agencies so that assistance may be provided to those in need in line with humanitarian principles. The Union has already mobilised humanitarian funding and stands ready to step it up as soon as conditions on the ground will allow humanitarian organisations to expand relief operations.

The European Council recalls its support for the efforts by the League of Arab States to end the violence in Syria, and lends its full support to the missions undertaken by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan as the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and League of Arab States on the Syrian crisis. It supports the launching of the Group of the Friends of the Syrian People and the conclusions of its first meeting on 24 February 2012.

# **P R E S S**

The European Council calls once more on all members of the United Nations Security Council, particularly Russia and China, to work together in an effort to stop the violence. The European Union supports the Syrian opposition in its struggle for freedom, dignity and democracy, recognises the Syrian National Council as a legitimate representative of Syrians and calls upon all members of the Syrian opposition to unite in its peaceful struggle for a new Syria, where all citizens enjoy equal rights. The European Union calls on all parties to promote a process aiming at a political solution.

The European Council stresses the responsibility of the Syrian authorities regarding the security of foreign nationals in Syria, including journalists, in particular by facilitating the evacuation of those who need it."

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