

Speech: EU8 joint statement on Syria

I would like to make the following statement today on behalf of the five EU Members of the Security Council (France, Netherlands, Poland, Sweden and the UK), joined today by the former (Italy) and future (Belgium and Germany) EU Members of the Security Council to show the continuity of the EU's position on Syria.

We as Member States of the European Union acknowledge the signing of the memorandum to establish a ceasefire on Idlib and we call on the Astana guarantors to ensure that this ceasefire is upheld and to safeguard the last remaining de-escalation zone in Syria. We emphasize the need for a comprehensive nationwide ceasefire and for safe, sustained and unhindered humanitarian access throughout the country.

We fully believe that the Idlib ceasefire agreement should be an opportunity for the urgent resumption of the UN-led political process in Geneva.

We express our full support for the efforts of Staffan de Mistura, Special Envoy for Syria, to establish urgently a credible and legitimate constitutional committee to advance the UN's efforts to achieve a sustainable political solution to the conflict in Syria in line with UN Security Council Resolution 2254.

We underscore the Special Envoy's authority to establish an inclusive constitutional committee, including the participation of a minimum of 30 percent women, that will begin the work of drafting a new Syrian constitution and laying the groundwork for free and fair UN-supervised elections consistent with UN Security Council Resolution 2254.

We call on all parties, but specifically Damascus, to constructively engage with the Special Envoy with the aim of, as quickly as possible and without any further delays, convening a credible and inclusive constitutional committee and we encourage the Special Envoy to report back to the Council shortly.

We reiterate that the EU will be ready to assist in the reconstruction of Syria only when a comprehensive, genuine and inclusive political transition, negotiated by the Syrian parties to the conflict on the basis of UN Security Council Resolution 2254 and the 2012 Geneva Communiqué, is firmly under way.