



# Supporting the future of Syria and the region

Brussels II Conference 24-25 April 2018

**PRESS**  
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**BACKGROUND NOTE**

Brussels, 23 April 2018

## Supporting the future of Syria and the region - Brussels II Conference 24-25 April 2018

#SyriaConf2018 - [www.brussels-conference-syria-2018.eu](http://www.brussels-conference-syria-2018.eu)

The EU and the UN will co-chair the second Brussels conference on 'Supporting the future of Syria and the region', which will take place in Brussels on 24-25 April.

The conference will bring together participants from **more than 85 countries and organisations at ministerial level** to discuss all key aspects of the Syria crisis: political, humanitarian and regional dimension. The conference will seek to maintain international engagement in delivering assistance to the Syrian people and host communities.

The High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini will co-chair the conference on behalf of the European Union, together with Johannes Hahn, European Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations and Christos Stylianides, European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management. For the UN, among others, under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock, UN Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura, High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi and UN Development Programme Administrator Achim Steiner are expected to attend.

The first day of the conference (24 April) will bring together around 200 NGOs from Syria and the region. It will consist of a day of dialogue with the NGOs, UN agencies, ministers of refugee-hosting countries and of international donors in the Charlemagne building, in presence of Commissioner Hahn and Commissioner Stylianides.

Separately, the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini, together with UN Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura, will also meet representatives from Syrian civil society.

Results from this first day of discussions will feed into the plenary sessions of 25 April. The sessions of 25 April will take place in the Europa building.

### Press opportunities

See the [indicative programme here](#).

[Press conferences and public events via video streaming](#)

[Video coverage in broadcast quality \(MPEG4\) and photo gallery](#)

Press office - General Secretariat of the Council

Rue de la Loi 175 - B-1048 BRUSSELS - Tel.: +32 (0)2 281 6319

[press.office@consilium.europa.eu](mailto:press.office@consilium.europa.eu) - [www.consilium.europa.eu/press](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/press)

## Supporting the future of Syria and the region

In the light of the latest developments in Syria, the conference will provide an opportunity for the international community to discuss the **political situation**. The EU will reaffirm that only a political solution will ensure lasting stability in Syria and reiterate its support for the work of the UN Special Envoy for Syria and the UN-led process to achieve an intra-Syrian political solution. The conference is expected to reaffirm the international support to reinvigorate the political process and to demonstrate global support for the relaunch of the UN-led intra-Syrian talks in Geneva.

On the humanitarian side, the conference will aim to enhance support and improve conditions to allow for a **principled international response to the humanitarian needs** generated by the conflict. This includes an immediate ceasefire, access to people in need and particularly the most vulnerable populations, humanitarian deliveries and the protection of civilians, civilian infrastructures such as schools and hospitals, relief aid workers and facilities.

The conference will seek to **maintain international engagement in delivering assistance** to the people of Syria and the region. It is expected that the international community will renew its strong support to the people of Syria, both inside Syria and in the neighbouring countries (notably Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey) and to hosting communities. In this context, the conference will **take stock of the implementation of commitments** the donors' community made at the London and Brussels I conferences in February 2016 and in April 2017 respectively. It will also **identify additional efforts** required to help those most in need. The conference is expected to highlight the need to foster the economic recovery of the refugee-hosting countries in the region and for supporting them in their efforts to face the development challenges, including through structural reforms.

### Programme of the meeting

The first day of the conference (24 April) will bring together around 200 NGOs from Syria and the region. It will consist of a day of dialogue between more the NGOs and ministers from donor and refugee-hosting countries and principals of UN agencies on **how support to the region can be further improved**. The meeting will cover key aspects of humanitarian and resilience assistance in Syria and the region. The two morning sessions will be dedicated to the protection of refugees across the region and to access and delivery of assistance. In the afternoon, discussions will focus on more longer-term aspects, namely youth and education and inclusive economic and social regional development. Commissioner Hahn and Commissioner Stylianides will participate.

Separately, High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini, together with UN Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura, will also meet representatives from Syrian civil society to discuss the role of civil society in Syria and the space for their work in the country and in the region.

Results from this first day of discussions will feed into the plenary sessions of the next day.

On 25 April at 9.00, the High Representative of the EU Federica Mogherini will open the ministerial part of the conference. It will be followed by speeches by representatives of the UN and by representatives of the three main refugee-hosting countries in the region, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. The opening ceremony will be livestreamed.

The plenary sessions will cover all key aspects of the conflict: the political aspects will be the focus of the morning plenary, economic recovery for the region will be at the centre of the early afternoon session and humanitarian aspects will be the focus of the late afternoon plenary. There will also be a parallel session on humanitarian protection issues inside Syria.

The closing session will take place at 18.00 and will be livestreamed. The total amount of pledges from the international community to the Syrian people and host communities will be announced during this session.

A co-chairs' declaration is expected to be published at the end of the day.

Representatives of partner governments and organisations will deliver their statements throughout the day. **Invited countries** include: all EU member states, Algeria, Australia, Bahrain, Brazil, Canada, China, Egypt, Holy See, Iceland, India, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Mexico, Norway, Pakistan, Oman, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and the USA.

**Invited organisations** include: European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, European Investment Bank, Food and Agriculture Organisation, Gulf Cooperation Council, International Organisation for Migration, International Monetary Fund, International Labour Organisation, Islamic Development Bank, League of Arab States, High Commissioner for Human Rights, Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, International Committee of the Red Cross, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, International Labour Organisation, United Nations Development Programme, UN-Habitat, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), UNESCO, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNICEF, UN Women, World Bank, World Food Programme, World Health Organisation. In addition, local civil society organisations were invited.

## **Background**

At the first Brussels Conference on 4-5 April 2017, participants agreed that in order to meet the massive needs of the populations inside Syria and in neighbouring countries, and strengthen the resilience of host communities, significant financial support as well as innovative and holistic approaches were needed. The international community pledged EUR 5.6 billion (US\$6 billion) in funding to support humanitarian, stabilisation and development activities in 2017 in Syria and the region, and a further EUR 3.5 billion (US\$3.7 billion) for 2018-20. International financial institutions and donors also announced almost EUR 27.9 billion (US\$30 billion) in loans.

The Brussels conferences on Supporting the future of Syria and the region built on the London Conference on Supporting Syria and the region of 4 February 2016. The London conference was organised under the leadership of the United Kingdom, Germany, Kuwait, Norway and the United Nations. At the London conference, the international community reaffirmed its solidarity with millions of vulnerable people living in Syria and Syrian refugees and affected host communities in the region. The donor community pledged significant financial support for humanitarian assistance and protection in Syria, as well as civilian stabilisation measures to strengthen resilience in host communities, building on the commitments made at the three previous pledging conferences in Kuwait from 2013-15.

Brussels I Conference: [www.brussels-conference-syria-2017.eu](http://www.brussels-conference-syria-2017.eu)

London Conference: <https://www.supportingsyria2016.com/>

## **In the margins**

### **Side events**

#### **EU Trust Fund in response to the Syria crisis, 23 April**

The Commission's DG NEAR will host a side event on the EU Trust Fund in response to the Syria crisis on 23 April. The event will take place at Bibliothèque Solvay in presence of Commissioner Johannes Hahn. The aim of the event is to give youth of the region a platform and a voice at the Syria conference and to highlight the EU's active and genuine commitment to Syria and its neighbouring countries. This event will focus on the role of children, youth, higher education as well as entrepreneurship opportunities in the region. Discussions will centre on youth, education, and employment. The event consists of three components: a panel discussion between Commissioner Hahn and youth from the region, a small story-telling concert with Aeham Ahmad, the pianist from Yarmouk, and an exhibition featuring photos and poster presentations of selected EU funded projects in Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon. Trust Fund partners UNICEF, DAAD (HOPES project) and SPARK are partners in the event.

## **Education for the future, 24 April**

Seven years into the Syrian war, thousands of children affected by the conflict lack access to quality primary and secondary education. This event will take place in the Charlemagne building and will look at education issues related to the Syrian conflict. It will be hosted by Christos Stylianides, European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management. High-level speakers will look at achievements and challenges in delivering quality education in Syria and the region.

### **Cultural events**

#### **Photo exhibition**

On the occasion of the conference, a **photo exhibition** on EU humanitarian aid in Syria will take place in the Atrium of the Justus Lipsius building. Commissioner Stylianides will inaugurate this photo exhibition on Monday 23 April at 14.00.

The exhibition will focus on the personal stories of Syrians receiving EU funded aid in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. The photo exhibition is organised by the Commission's Directorate General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO).

#### **TOURAB: Syria art space and concert**

Over 50 Syrian artists are displaying their works at the 'TOURAB: Syria art space' in the Galerie Ravenstein in Brussels, between 17 and 27 April. The art space features an exhibition, concerts, debates, films and workshops.

In addition, Bozar will host a concert by Syrian musicians, "Syrians got Talent", on 24 April.

The events aim to showcase Syria's diversity, talents and human potential.

The artists will reflect the diversity of backgrounds and views among Syrians, both in-country and from the regional and European diaspora.

[TOURAB: Syria art space](#)

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