

1 **On Syria**

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- 3 1. Syria has been ruined and traumatised by a murderous civil war for over six years. Half of
- 4 the country's inhabitants have been forced to flee and today still live in uncertain
- 5 conditions, ~~mostly more than 6 million are internally displaced and 5 million~~ in camps in
- 6 the neighboring countries. As part of the Syrian population now enjoys a slight respite
- 7 from mindless killing and savage destruction, the European Green Party calls on the
- 8 international community not to draw its attention away from this country.
- 9 2. We welcome the ~~temporary different~~ cease-fires ~~that have happened since during the end~~
- 10 ~~of last year period of time, but we should strengthen the that seems to be holding across~~
- 11 ~~most of Syria, and we support all~~ diplomatic efforts, ~~which may in order to~~ allow ~~for a~~
- 12 continued suspension of hostilities, ~~its a~~ consolidation ~~of the cease-fire~~ and the beginning
- 13 of another round of peace talks. These peace talks must also give an opportunity ~~to~~
- 14 ~~women to the civil society, including women, youth and ethnic and religious minorities~~ to
- 15 voice their contribution. Since the start of this tragedy, the EGP has been very clear: We
- 16 reject and condemn attempts to coerce Syrians into submission by military force and
- 17 repression. Such military and violent solutions cannot provide a sustainable path forward
- 18 for Syria and a future for Syrians.~~there is no military solution~~ and only an inclusive, political
- 19 process will provide an end to the war and a truly lasting peace. Setting pre-conditions or
- 20 excluding negotiating parties is the best guarantee to see fighting resumed.
- 21 3. There will be a time to reflect and assess the mistakes and failings of the European Union
- 22 and its Member States and of the international community ~~West~~ at large in the Syrian
- 23 conflict. There will be a need to draw necessary conclusions with regards to the dramatic
- 24 consequences of the assistance of toppling a dictator through military means. Yet, the time
- 25 is now for pooling all European diplomatic resources in support of the current UN-led
- 26 peace talks. At the same time, the Gulf States are also called upon to contribute their part
- 27 to the solution.
- 28 4. While side-lined and marginalised at the diplomatic table - mostly because of its own doing
- 29 ~~— European states has have~~ a role to play in the recovery and reconstruction of Syria and
- 30 an experience to share in terms of reconciliation, fostering trust and overcoming the
- 31 destructive forces of war. European states, together with local oppositional democratic
- 32 forces such as local councils and various NGO's, should promote a vision of a future Syria,
- 33 which is plural, inclusive, democratic and respectful of all groups. European states should
- 34 use its influence and economic weight to press all actors - in particular its regional allies
- 35 partners - to de-escalate, rather than re-fuel, the conflict. ~~Some of the underlying reasons~~
- 36 of the social unrest are ecological ones such as the droughts due to global climate change
- 37 worsened by the exhaustive draining of the ground water. The question of water
- 38 resources has been a contributing factor in regional conflicts.
- 39 5. We reiterate our absolute condemnation of the atrocities and the widespread violations
- 40 of human rights and international humanitarian law, committed by the forces of the Assad
- 41 regime and its allies, as well as the abuses and crimes against humanity committed by non-
- 42 State armed groups, in particular Daesh (also sometimes called IS or ISIS) and Jabhat Fateh
- 43 al-Sham (formerly al-Nusra). All war crimes and violations of human rights must be
- 44 prosecuted. Reconciliation will have to be based on the due process of law.
- 45 ~~6.~~ We deeply deplore that European many governments and some of our close allies
- 46 partners have provided military, ~~financial or logistical~~ support to warring actors that have
- 47 been, and still are, responsible for serious crimes. We are deeply concerned by the fact
- 48 that the armed opposition in Syria is dominated by numerous radical Islamist militias, who,

49 in the territories they control, harshly discriminate against or persecute women, sexual
50 minorities, non-Muslims and Muslims who do not subscribe to their rules of religious
51 practice.

52 ~~7.~~ We denounce the complicity of President Putin in the destruction in Syria, as illustrated
53 most gruesomely by the flattening of parts of Aleppo by Russian air forces. Nevertheless,
54 the EGP must deal realistically with the fact that Russia has secured itself a decisive role on
55 the Syrian question. ~~While the EGP recognises that Russia has secured itself a decisive and~~
56 indispensable role on the Syrian question, we denounce the complicity of President Putin
57 in the destruction in Syria, as illustrated most gruesomely by the flattening of Aleppo by
58 Russian air forces. Foreign involvement has contributed to the prolongation and
59 aggravation of this war. We hereby also condemn other foreign powers' military
60 involvement, especially Saudi Arabia's, in promoting and supporting the military capabilities
61 of terrorist and Takfirist organisations. We especially note Turkey's efforts to further
62 destabilise the situation on the ground by invading Syrian territory and conducting warfare,
63 mainly against Syrian Kurdish military groups that had been successfully protecting their
64 native lands from Daesh and other extremist troops.

65 ~~8.~~ We vehemently condemn the crimes against humanity that have been perpetrated by
66 all parties involved in this bloody 6-year conflict. These are the worst human rights violations
67 in recent history and should not be excused by any arguments, either religious, ethnic or
68 political. The reports of such violations perpetrated in detention centers under the control of
69 the Assad regime are appalling. ~~The latest reports of mass hangings and exterminations and of~~
70 widespread sexual violence against children in detention centres under the control of Assad
71 confirm the latter's ranking among the worst barbarians of human history. These atrocities
72 cannot be rationalised by pointing to atrocities that have been committed by Daesh or other
73 groups.

74
75 ~~9.6.~~ We remain convinced that there can be neither an effective conflict resolution nor
76 sustainable peace in Syria without accountability for the crimes committed by the Assad
77 regime and the other conflicting parties. Peace is not antonymous to justice; lasting peace
78 requires justice. If justice is our goal, then we cannot sit back and wait until the war comes
79 to an end. We therefore welcome the UN resolution establishing the International,
80 Impartial and Independent Mechanism for Syria with the purpose of collecting evidence of
81 the most serious crimes committed in Syria. We call on all European governments to
82 secure sufficient funding for the Mechanism to be able to carry out its important tasks. In
83 this context, the EGP welcomes the announced Conference on Syria to be held in Brussels
84 on April 5th 2017. The EGP expects the presence of the democratic oppositional forces
85 inside and outside of Syria at this conference. We stress the importance of full
86 transparency regarding any financial support that is offered.

87 ~~10.7.~~ We deplore the blockage of a referral by the UN Security Council to the International
88 Criminal Court. ~~and w~~ We therefore call for an EU coordinated accountability strategy
89 towards the crimes committed in Syria by asking Europe's national governments to
90 establish and strengthen, ~~the creation of an ad-hoc Syrian war crimes tribunal and for the~~
91 application of the principle of universal jurisdiction across their national courts. The
92 broader the principle is implemented in national courts, the narrower are the chances of
93 Syrian individuals to get away with their crimes.

94 ~~11.8.~~ We condemn the heinous acts of Daesh within the region and beyond, including
95 against civilians in the streets of cities such as Berlin, Brussels, Istanbul, London and Paris,
96 and we firmly wish to see ~~an end the defeat to~~ of this criminal group of mass murderers,

97 bringing perpetrators of war crimes to justice. We stress, however, that Daesh
98 represents, first and foremost, the consequence, rather than the cause, of the convulsions
99 in the Middle East. Fighting Daesh will be in vain is not enough unless its the foundations
100 of its recruitment are addressed; these include sectarianism, marginalisation and
101 discrimination against entire groups, including Arab Sunnis. We need a clearly thought
102 through strategy, driven by locals, to find the kind of sustainable solution to the conflict
103 that does not guarantee the creation of Daesh's successor. The hard lessons from the
104 liberation of Fallujah need to be carefully reminded as the battle of Mosul unfolds and that
105 of Raqqa approaches.

106 9. Europe should support, wherever possible, the building of the capacities of the people and
107 civil society of Syria, including through actors that promote human rights, equality
108 (including gender equality and minority rights), democracy and empowerment, inside Syria,
109 but also outside its borders for the population in exile.

110 ~~+2.~~ 10. Beyond, in the long run, the European Union will have to join the UN in organising and
111 managing a substantial effort towards a post war state building process in Syria.

112 ~~+3.~~ 11. The EGP reiterates its solidarity with Syria's neighbouring countries and nations that,
113 by hosting millions of Syrian refugees, have reminded the world, and in particular the
114 European governments, that solidarity to those in distress is a fundament of mankind.
115 Europe should be ashamed of itself. We condemn the hijacking of European development,
116 migration and foreign and security policies by narrow-minded, xenophobic and parochial
117 considerations. We urge Europe to step up its support to the neighbours of Syria who are
118 hosting the millions of refugees that fled their country, which should not translate into the
119 construction of walls designed to prevent migration, or the fostering of autocratic regimes.
120 We propose the European institutions and Member States to support education programs
121 for Syrian refugee children. The EU-Turkey deal hasn't solved the refugees' situation, but
122 only pushed the challenge out of Europe's territory instead. We urge our Member States
123 to finally live up to their principles and to their obligations under international
124 humanitarian law, vis-à-vis refugees and asylum-seekers (including through humanitarian
125 visa). The EU member states should keep their promises to relocate the agreed number of
126 160.000 refugees from Greece and Italy. Until date a mere 10% of these people have been
127 relocated. In addition to these numbers, the EU should relocate an additional number of
128 (vulnerable) refugees, identified by UNHCR, to relieve refugee camps in the region and to
129 provide for safe alternative routes to those of (often criminal) human smugglers. Also,
130 under the condition of the guarantee of security, we want European countries to help in
131 facilitating safe voluntary returns for refugees to Syria and to help the country in building a
132 new Syrian society based on democratic values and respect of human rights. We reiterate
133 our commitment to establish a truly European Asylum procedure and policy.