

Brussels, 20 JUN 2017  
A(2017) 2400040-2737111

To all MEP signatories of the letter regarding the new Syria accountability mechanism, established by the UN General Assembly on 21 December 2016.

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to thank you for your letter of 4 May 2017, on the funding of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism for Syria (IIIM).

Syrian and international civil society actors have been documenting violations of international humanitarian law and human rights abuses for several years. It is therefore essential to establish and fund an organisation that would be able to assist in the investigation and prosecution of those responsible for war crimes in Syria.

As I have recently emphasised in my speech to the plenary of the European Parliament, accountability is key in working towards a political solution and in securing sustainable peace for Syria. It is an equally important element in the EU Strategy for Syria and indeed it was mentioned in the Declaration of the Brussels Conference "*Supporting the future of Syria and the region*". Funding of the IIIM, the first mechanism ever created during an ongoing conflict, is all the more relevant in this context.

Building a firm political and financial commitment is therefore essential in making accountability work for Syria. The EU and its Member States are clearly doing a lot to have the Mechanism established and ensure its functioning, including through adequate financial means. The United Nations General Assembly Resolution 71/248 of December 2016 was supported by all EU Member States and seventeen of them have already contributed. We are equally looking into mobilising funds from the EU budget and a decision is expected in the coming weeks.

It is important to ensure burden sharing and a balance in the geographical distribution of donors and we are encouraging countries around the world to contribute in order to fill the gap; of an estimated annual budget of \$ 13 million, \$ 9 million have been secured to date.

I would like to reiterate the commitment of the European Union to national reconciliation and transitional justice, expressed so far through support to the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria and to the Commission for International Justice and Accountability.

Thank you for the interest you have expressed as regards this important matter and your efforts to secure funding, most recently through the call made in the European Parliament Resolution on the EU Strategy on Syria.

I look forward to continuing this discussion and to pursuing these efforts with your support.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F. Mogherini', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Federica Mogherini