

Question for written answer E-002732/2024

to the Commission

Rule 144

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Subject: The Syrian civil war and plans in the EU to return Syrian refugees

The civil war in Syria reignited at the end of November following clashes between Assad's army and Hayat Tahrir al-Sham rebel forces, which are designated as a terrorist group by the EU. These confrontations led to indiscriminate bombing of civilian infrastructure by Russian-backed Assad forces and have resulted in a high number of casualties and increased regional instability. Earlier in 2024, eight EU Member States¹ called for the normalisation of relations with the Syrian regime², aiming to facilitate the return of Syrian refugees to their country. In the Netherlands, the Government is developing plans to designate certain regions in Syria as 'safe', which would mean refugees from these areas would no longer be eligible for asylum and could be returned³.

1. Does the Commission agree that the normalisation of relations with a criminal regime would neither lead to an end to the war in Syria, nor address the migration flows from Syria to Europe?
2. Has the Commission responded to the call by the aforementioned group of Member States for the normalisation of relations with the Syrian regime? If so, how?
3. Will the Commission express the firm view that Syria is not a safe country, declare that refugees cannot be returned, and consider the aforementioned Member States' calls and plans for the normalisation of relations as completely inappropriate?

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¹ Italy, Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Greece, Slovenia and Slovakia.

² <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20240723-8-member-states-call-on-eu-to-review-and-assess-syria-policy/>.

³ <https://open.overheid.nl/documenten/24494cec-a2de-4d34-ad2e-526d038affa9/file>.