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Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas
on behalf of the European Commission
(13.5.2026)

The High Representative/Vice-President (HR/VP) has been in continuous contact with partners in the Middle East to call for maximum restraint, urge all parties to comply with international humanitarian law and to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure, as well as to ensure freedom of navigation and safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz.

On 9 April 2026, the HR/VP on behalf of the European Union, welcomed the ceasefire¹ agreed by the US and Iran. The statement stressed that diplomacy is key to resolve all outstanding issues and parties should continue engaging in good faith in efforts to reach a sustainable agreement on all areas of concern. The EU contributes to all diplomatic efforts in this endeavour, taking into consideration its full range of interests and concerns, in coordination with partners.

EU restrictive measures ('sanctions') as tools of the Common Foreign and Security Policy are adopted by the Council with unanimity. The Council is empowered to decide on the possible extension of any measure, while Member States are responsible for the effective implementation and enforcement of sanctions.

It is for the Member States to decide their own policies within NATO. Membership of NATO, including participation in its integrated military structures, is a national prerogative and decision. As regards the use of military bases by individual Member States, this also remains their prerogative; decisions are taken by national governments in line with their sovereign authority.

NATO is a strategic partner for the EU and plays a key role in territorial defence for the 23 common members, while providing crucial deterrence against external threats to Europe's borders.

¹ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2026/04/09/statement-by-the-high-representative-on-behalf-of-the-eu-on-the-ceasefire-agreed-by-the-united-states-and-iran/>.