

EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE



THE HEAD OF DIVISION

DIRECTORATE North Africa, Middle East, Arabian Peninsula,
Iran and Iraq
DIVISION MENA I – Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria

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eeas.mena.1(2017)448253

by e-mail to: kancelaria@nra.pl

Dear Mr Trela,

Thank you for your letter of 16th December informing the EU of the Polish Bar's resolution on the situation in the Aleppo and its commitment to provide humanitarian assistance to those in need, as well as calling for EU member states to provide help to those civilians who have fallen victim to military actions in Aleppo and throughout Syria.

The President of the European Commission asked me to respond on his behalf. As you may be aware, the EU and its Member States are the leading donors in the international response to the Syrian crisis, having donated €9 billion collectively in humanitarian and development assistance since the start of the conflict to support the Syrians, including refugees in neighbouring countries.

We have all followed the complex operation to evacuate civilians and rebels from Eastern Aleppo was completed on 22nd December, under the supervision of UN monitors, in accordance with UNSCR 2328. The EU considers that civilian evacuations should always be conducted impartially and in accordance with international humanitarian law, and calls again upon all parties, in particular the regime and its allies, to take responsibility for the implementation of the Security Council resolution without delay. Meanwhile, humanitarian organisations continue to provide aid to displaced families and those who are returning to Eastern Aleppo. The UN and international NGOs have finally obtained access to these districts and work is ongoing to assess humanitarian needs.

On 30 December a ceasefire was announced in Aleppo and the rest of the country, as a result of an agreement made under the aegis of Russia and Turkey. This agreement, which remains in effect, has allowed a significant reduction in the violence throughout most of the country and should allow a return to negotiations, under UN auspices, in Geneva.

In 2017, the EU will maintain its funding in light of emerging needs. On 30th December, the High Representative Federica Mogherini announced that the EU will host a ministerial-level conference on the future of Syria, both as a follow up on the implementation of donors' pledges as made in London last year and as a political discussion to give momentum to the transition and eventual reconstruction and reconciliation.

I thank you once again for your letter and no effort should be spared in helping to prevent the abuse of human rights in the Syrian conflict.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'P. Costello', written in a cursive style.

Patrick Costello