



The President

Brussels, 17. 07. 2026
Ares (2026) 3136396

Dear Honourable Member,

I would like to thank you, and your co-signatories, for your letter regarding the disappearance of journalists Eva Maria Michelmann and Ahmet Polad from Syria.

The European Union is closely following the recent developments in north-east Syria, including reports of the disappearance of these two journalists from Raqqa. While consular assistance to EU citizens remains an exclusive national competence, EU Delegations can be asked, under certain conditions and in accordance with Article 5(10) of Council Decision 2010/427/EU of 26 July 2010 establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service, to support Member States. At this stage, the Delegation of the European Union to Syria has not received any requests for support from EU Member States on this specific matter.

The EU consistently recalls that all parties must respect international humanitarian law and international human rights law, including the protection of journalists and the prohibition of arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance.

./..

*Ms Özlem Alev Demirel, MEP
European Parliament
60 Rue Wiertz
1047 Brussels*

E-mail: oezlem.demirel@europarl.europa.eu

The reported disappearance of these two journalists underscores the broader issue of missing persons across Syria, and the need for comprehensive and inclusive transitional justice processes. The EU calls on the Syrian transitional authorities to conduct prompt, transparent, and impartial investigations into all such cases, in cooperation with the National Commission for Missing Persons, as well as relevant international mechanisms, such as the International Commission on Missing Persons and the Independent Institution on Missing Persons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

The EU will continue to advocate for a safe and enabling environment for independent reporting and media in Syria, in line with international standards, and to support efforts that uphold freedom of expression and human rights.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ursula v.d.L.', is positioned above the printed name.

Ursula von der Leyen