# Now more than ever, it's time for the EU to speak with one voice

President Luca Jahier on the situation in the Middle East and Libya
Statement by
**Organisation:** European Economic and Social Committee

On behalf of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), representing the organised civil society at EU level, I am deeply concerned about the increased tensions in the Middle East and Libya.

The EESC considers that there is an urgent need for calm and peaceful solutions of all conflicts and sensitive situations worldwide and particularly in the region. We urge for a de-escalation of spiralling violence. The European Union must speak with one voice on all aspects of foreign policy given many crisis unfolding in the immediate EU neighbourhood, including the migration and refugee crisis, are interrelated.

Since Turkey and Libya signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) demarcating maritime zones in the region, a series of worsening diplomatic episodes have unfolded on Europe's borders. Europe cannot afford any more crises or wars.

As the voice of European Civil Society, the EESC welcomes the EU commitment of salvaging the Iran nuclear agreement and rebutting US President Trump's call on Europe to follow in his footsteps. And for this commitment to yield actual results on the ground, not only must we remind partners of our EU unity, we must also act accordingly, refraining from pursuing conflicting individual interests.

We must remain vigilant considering how critical and high-risk the situation is. It can get out of control. As with the Brexit negotiation, Europe needs to be more united and speak with one forceful voice when asserting our stance on the volatile international scene.

On 30 January, the EESC (External Relations section) will hold an extraordinary debate on the critical situation in the Middle East and the role of civil society on the ground.

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