



Press and Information

Court of Justice of the European Union

**PRESS RELEASE No 85/18**

Luxembourg, 14 June 2018

Judgment in Case C-458/17 P  
Rami Makhlouf v Council

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**The Court of Justice confirms that the fund-freezing measures imposed on Rami Makhlouf, cousin of Bashar al-Assad, must be maintained for the period 2016-2017**

Since 2011 the Council has included Mr Rami Makhlouf on the list of persons covered by the restrictive measures adopted against Syria. Thus, Mr Makhlouf has been refused entry to or transit through the territory of the Member States of the EU, while his funds and economic resources have been frozen. The reason for Mr Makhlouf's entry on the list is as follows: 'Leading businessman operating in Syria with interests in the telecommunications, financial services, transport and property sectors; he has financial interests in and/or holds senior and executive positions in Syriatel, the leading mobile telephone operator in Syria, the investment funds Al Mashreq, Bena Properties and Cham Holding. He furnishes financing and support to the Syrian regime through his business interests. He is an influential member of the Makhlouf family and closely connected to the Assad family; cousin of President Bashar al-Assad'.

Mr Makhlouf brought an action before the General Court for annulment of the decision to maintain his listing for the period from 29 May 2016 to 31 May 2017. By judgment of 18 May 2017,<sup>1</sup> the General Court dismissed Mr Makhlouf's action and confirmed that the restrictive measures imposed on him for that period were to be maintained. Dissatisfied, Mr Makhlouf brought an appeal before the Court of Justice, asking that the General Court's judgment be set aside.

By today's judgment, **the Court dismisses Mr Makhlouf's appeal and thus confirms that the restrictive measures against him must be maintained for the period 2016-2017.**

In particular, the Court considers that the General Court did not reverse the burden of proof by requiring that Mr Makhlouf prove that he was not or was no longer connected to the Syrian regime. The General Court in fact held that, in the light of the evidence in the file, the Council had actually demonstrated that Mr Makhlouf was associated with and provided support to the Syrian regime.

As to the claim that the General Court omitted to rule on several arguments relied upon at first instance by Mr Makhlouf, the Court of Justice finds that that is not the case.

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**NOTE:** An appeal, on a point or points of law only, may be brought before the Court of Justice against a judgment or order of the General Court. In principle, the appeal does not have suspensive effect. If the appeal is admissible and well founded, the Court of Justice sets aside the judgment of the General Court. Where the state of the proceedings so permits, the Court of Justice may itself give final judgment in the case. Otherwise, it refers the case back to the General Court, which is bound by the decision given by the Court of Justice on the appeal.

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The [full text](#) of the judgment is published on the CURIA website on the day of delivery.

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<sup>1</sup> Case: [T-410/16](#) Makhlouf v Council, see also Press Release No [55/17](#).