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Subject: Team Europe response to global food insecurity
– Council conclusions (20 June 2022)

Delegations will find in the annex the Council conclusions on the Team Europe response to global food insecurity, as approved by the Council at its 3884th meeting held on 20 June 2022.

Council conclusions on the Team Europe response to global food insecurity

1. The Council remains deeply concerned that vulnerable populations globally face unprecedented levels of food insecurity. While acute hunger, malnutrition and risk of famine, caused predominantly by poverty, conflicts, political instability, socioeconomic conditions, natural hazards and climate change were already on the rise, the Council recalls that Russia's unjustifiable, unprovoked and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine with its deliberate bombardment and looting of agricultural assets, destroying storage and food processing facilities, together with the blockade of Black Sea ports have dramatically aggravated the food security crisis.
2. Food systems have for many years been stressed and the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the fragility of both supply chains and agri-food systems and eroded macro-economic stability in developing countries, notably Least Developed Countries. The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine has led to a significant drop in food, animal feed and fertiliser availability, significant price increases for food, energy and fertilisers, and has aggravated global food insecurity. This is having dramatic consequences not only for the Ukrainian people, but also for many vulnerable populations around the globe. Moreover, it increases the risk of social unrest, conflict and instability and has, together with other challenges, possible consequences on irregular migration and forced displacement. It has also affected the capacity to deliver humanitarian assistance.

3. The Council stands in solidarity with the most affected partner countries. In the face of these challenges, the EU will remain a responsive, responsible and reliable global actor. The Council acknowledges that those hit the hardest are the least developed and fragile countries, countries highly dependent on food supplies and imports from Ukraine and Russia, as well as countries most affected by climate change. The Council stresses the urgency of delivering a swift and comprehensive global response to protect the lives, human rights and livelihoods of persons in the most vulnerable situations, strengthening local production and reducing import dependency, while supporting the transition towards sustainable food systems and enhanced resilience. The Council draws attention to the gender equality dimension of food security and urges the Commission to address gender-based discrimination in its policies, partnerships and initiatives. The Council reiterates its commitment to effective multilateral cooperation and solutions and stresses the urgency of accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its sustainable development goals, in particular SDG 2 on Zero Hunger, while recalling the EU priorities for the 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit and the EU commitments made at the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Summit in December 2021.

4. There are no sanctions on Russian exports of food to global markets. EU sanctions are targeted in particular at the Russian government, Russia's economy and financial system, the military and Russian elites including economic actors responsible for or supporting the destabilisation of Ukraine, in order to thwart Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. The Council emphasises the need to visibly communicate EU actions as a responsible and trustworthy global actor and to counter Russian information manipulation and interference, which falsely blames sanctions for the deteriorating global food security situation, including using food as a weapon with global repercussions. Russian information manipulation is part of a coordinated and State-funded campaign. The EU and its Member States, together with other partners in multilateral fora, will continue to raise awareness about this, including in partner countries.

5. The Council stresses the importance of the EU demonstrating strong solidarity through a swift and comprehensive response based on effective multilateralism. This will build on the Communication from the Commission of 23 March 2022 on ‘Safeguarding food security and reinforcing the resilience of food systems’ and on the three pillars – trade, solidarity and production – of the Food and Agriculture Resilience Mission (FARM), as welcomed by the European Council on 30-31 May 2022. This response should be fully aligned with the UN Global Crisis Response Group (GCRG) and other relevant international initiatives, notably the G7-initiated Global Alliance for Food Security.
6. The Council calls for a robust, effective and transparent Team Europe response to global food insecurity comprising the following four strands of action: 1. Solidarity through emergency relief and support for affordability; 2. Boosting sustainable production, resilience and food systems transformation; 3. Facilitating trade by helping Ukraine export agricultural goods via different land routes and EU ports and by promoting open global trade in food and fertilisers; and 4. Effective multilateralism. These four strands are intended to be mutually supportive and to integrate short, medium and longer-term responses.
7. **Under the solidarity strand**, the Council calls on the Commission and Member States to urgently increase commitments, using available tools, in humanitarian aid and short-term tailor-made support to the most vulnerable groups in affected countries and regions, in order to, in particular, support local production and access to food, including through a humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach. The EU and Member States will rely on the analytical capacity of the Global Network Against Food Crises (GNAFC) and use a combination of implementation modalities, including, inter alia, providing cash assistance and support through existing education and social protection systems whenever appropriate and possible, and strengthening advocacy and joint initiatives at country and regional levels. The response should be based on regularly updated assessments of vulnerabilities and needs.

8. The EU and its Member States will support food affordability by addressing the fiscal and macro-economic stability of low-income and vulnerable countries and contributing to international initiatives aimed at assisting global partners in debt relief and macro-economic stability, recalling in this regard the recent IFI Action plan to address food insecurity. This includes accelerating the implementation of the G20/Paris Club Common Framework for Debt Treatment. The Council encourages the Commission and the Member States to explore the possibilities of additional voluntary contributions to the re-channelling of advanced economies' Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) to vulnerable countries, through IMF-specific mechanisms.
9. In addition to ongoing cooperation and support programmes by the EU and its Member States, the Council welcomes the recent emergency mobilisation in support of key affected regions, in particular the EU contribution of EUR 225 million to support the Southern Neighbourhood through the Food and Resilience Facility, the EUR 1 billion Team Europe pledge in support of the Sahel and Lake Chad regions, as well as the over EUR 600 million Team Europe pledge in support of the Horn of Africa.

10. **Under the production, resilience and food systems transformation strand**, the Council highlights the importance of supporting medium and long-term sustainable solutions to address food security and malnutrition. Underlying factors of the current food insecurity should therefore be addressed such as in particular climate change, desertification and degradation of fertile land, while strengthening sustainable local production capacities in partner countries. In this regard, the Council strongly encourages the Commission and the Member States to increase their support to sustainable, inclusive and resilient aquatic and agri-food systems. This can be done through, inter alia, investments in food value chains and agro-ecological and other innovative approaches in general, diversification of trade flows and production, measures to enhance access to affordable healthy food, reduced dependence on and use of fossil fuels and more efficient and sustainable use of synthetic inputs (fertilisers, pesticides), improved resilience to climate change and loss of biodiversity, strengthened transboundary water cooperation, improved land governance, enhanced capacities of local producers, measures against food waste, integrated local and regional markets and access to finance by smallholder farmers and farmers' organisations, and relevant digital solutions, research and innovation for which the EU will play a leading role in the CGIAR. All initiatives should be in line with the EU Green Deal, Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies as well as with the EU Directive 2019/633 on unfair trading practices in the agricultural and food supply chain. The response will build, as much as possible, on the existing framework and commitments, such as the EU-AU Summit and agreed investments therein on food systems and the Great Green Wall. Initiatives should include a special focus on women and girls as actors of change.
11. Acknowledging the African Union's 2022 'Year of nutrition', and underlining the threats to the objective of sound health in all regions of the world, the Council calls on the High Representative, the Commission and Member States to further engage with African partners in a deepened dialogue on food security and nutrition. Team Europe will engage further on flagship initiatives identified at the EU-AU Summit, including on sustainable agricultural value chains and resilient food systems, together with African partners.

12. The Council calls for increased mobilisation of innovative solutions and private sector support, recalling the important needs of least developed and fragile countries as well as countries most affected by food insecurity in other regions, including the Southern Neighbourhood, including through the European Fund for Sustainable Development plus (EFSD+) and the European Financial Architecture for Development (EFAD) which aims inter alia at strengthening the participation of the European Development Finance Institutions (EDFIs).
13. **Under the strand of facilitating trade**, the Council stresses the key importance of urgently assisting Ukraine to produce and export agri-food commodities via different land routes and EU ports. The Council commends the measures taken so far to that end by the Member States and calls for further strengthened efforts from the Commission and the Member States in this regard, notably through the rapid implementation of the ‘Solidarity Lanes Action Plan’ to bring Ukrainian grain back onto global markets, taking into account at the same time the needs of those already suffering the immediate consequences of war, the people of Ukraine, while also supporting countries bordering Ukraine. Moreover, the Council encourages the Commission and Member States to continue facilitating the swift supply of key inputs for further production to Ukraine, notably fertilisers, animal feed, seeds and fuel.
14. The Council also calls on the Commission, the High Representative and the Member States to work jointly with relevant international partners to promote an open, transparent and predictable trade environment, notably to avoid inadequate stockpiling of key staple commodities and export restrictions on food and key agricultural inputs such as fertilisers. These measures are counterproductive; they contribute to further food price volatility; and exacerbate food insecurity. In particular, the Council firmly supports a strict export restriction exemption on foodstuffs purchased for non-commercial humanitarian purposes by the World Food Programme and other relevant humanitarian partners - currently being negotiated at the WTO -, and an enhanced food and fertilizer market transparency and policy response through the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS), in coordination with the OECD and the FAO, private actors and under the overarching framework of the GCRG. The Council notes efforts to develop initiatives at scale to cover the import food cost-gap for net importing countries.

15. **Under the multilateralism strand**, the Council reiterates its commitment to effective multilateralism and calls on the Commission, the High Representative and the Member States to strengthen their engagement with key multilateral partners: relevant UN organisations, in particular Rome-based agencies (the FAO, the WFP, and the IFAD) and the Committee on World Food Security, the G7/G20 and the WTO as well as international financial institutions both at headquarters and country level. This would support a global and well-coordinated response, facilitate coordination between various initiatives and contribute to the involvement of all relevant actors, including the private sector and civil society.
16. The Council supports the important role of the Global Network against Food Crises as the global alliance of humanitarian and development actors committed to tackling the root causes of food crises and promoting sustainable solutions. It should be central to the coordinated assessment of needs and to the fostering of a humanitarian-development-peace nexus at global, regional and national levels.
17. In this context, the Council supports the Team Europe response to global food insecurity and calls on the Commission, the EEAS and the Member States to:
 - a) provide the necessary support to the UN Global Crisis Response Group and operationalise the strands of action as outlined in these conclusions, including within FARM and the Global Alliance for Food Security;
 - b) prioritise their financial support to address global food security including immediate humanitarian needs, including financial and technical assistance for food-importing countries where necessary, as well as medium to long-term sustainable food systems and enhanced local production for better resilience, and exploring all available funding sources, including accelerating and frontloading programmes and mobilising reserves from the European Development Fund, in line with the European Council conclusions of 30-31 May 2022;
 - c) deliver country and regional tailor-made responses in a Team Europe approach and, whenever possible, through Team Europe initiatives;

- d) set up jointly a monitoring system, based on existing OECD-DAC data and guidelines, to ensure funding accountability and transparency; in that regard, the Council calls for regular updates on the resources mobilised under the Team Europe response to global food insecurity including concrete flagship initiatives;
 - e) intensify joint communication efforts at multilateral, regional and country level in order to address perceptions and concerns in partner countries; urgently strengthen the efforts of the EEAS to monitor and counter Russia's information manipulation campaigns aimed at diverting the responsibility for the food security crisis away from its war of aggression against Ukraine. The Council calls on the Commission and the EEAS to work together with the Member States by sharing and coordinating common messages;
 - f) report regularly to the Council on the implementation of the joint response.
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