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'I' ITEM NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 2)
Subject:	Attendance of third parties at the Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid meetings during the Czech Presidency (1 July - 31 December 2022) <i>- Approval</i>

1. The Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA) discusses the EU's humanitarian strategies and policies, as well as its response to humanitarian crises. Its work is guided by the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, and International Humanitarian Law (IHL). COHAFA monitors humanitarian needs resulting from man-made and natural disasters outside the EU, ensures the coherence and coordination of the EU's collective response to these crises, discusses international, horizontal and sectorial humanitarian policies, and promotes the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, the humanitarian principles and IHL.
2. To adequately fulfil its tasks in this framework, COHAFA needs to be able to rely on the operational input from and exchanges of information and views with third parties, in particular with relevant humanitarian partners, which can be either international organisations and bodies or non-governmental organisations, as well as think tanks and academia, working and researching in the field of humanitarian affairs. It is important for the quality of aid that information exchange with partners covers all aspects of the work, such as strategy, accountability and results.

3. Taking the above into account, and within the limits of its mandate, it may be justified for COHAFA to invite third parties to its meetings and in the margins of such meetings subject to the conditions set out below.
4. These third parties are divided into three categories:
 - a) representatives of international organisations and bodies that are well-established and recognised partners of the EU (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, International Committee of the Red Cross, United Nations and its agencies (e.g. OCHA, UNDP, UNDRR, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP), World Bank Group);
 - b) representatives of non-governmental organisations dealing with humanitarian assistance (Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition, Alliance 2015, Caritas Internationalis, CARE International, International Federation of Red Cross And Red Crescent Societies, People in Need, Médecins Sans Frontières);
 - c) think tanks and academia (European Centre for Development Policy Management).
5. The attendance of these third parties in COHAFA meetings and in the margins of such meetings for the purposes of their operational input and the exchange of information and views between them and the members of COHAFA are in the interest of the Council, as they support the objectives laid down in COHAFA mandate: to promote the exchange of information on humanitarian crisis situations, in particular the assessment of humanitarian needs and adequate and timely provision of humanitarian aid.
6. When invited, those third parties may state their view or inform COHAFA concerning a subject at issue under a given agenda item. They may answer the questions of COHAFA delegates. However, they cannot be allowed to intervene during the deliberations, unless their views on the operational or technical dimension of different policy options are expressly sought during the relevant meeting on such very specific aspects. Proceedings will be organised so that the representatives of those third parties do not participate in the drafting of written documents in the course of the decision-making process, including with drafting suggestions or detailed comments. Whenever possible, the meetings will be organised in different parts so that the representatives of third parties can be requested to leave the room for the deliberation and discussion phases.

7. In view of the above, the Permanent Representatives Committee is invited to approve the attendance of the representatives of the above mentioned third parties at COHAFA meetings and in the margins of such meetings to be organised during the Czech Presidency until 31 December 2022 and for the purposes outlined in paragraphs 2 and 5 above.
 8. The Council secretariat will produce an information note to the Permanent Representatives Committee specifying the guests, who have attended COHAFA meetings and in the margins of such meetings at the end of the Czech Presidency.
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