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COJUR 46
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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Danish Presidency of the Council of the EU Work Programme Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA) 1 July – 31 December 2025

On behalf of the Presidency, delegations will find in annex the work programme of the Danish Presidency for the Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA) from 1 July to 31 December 2025.

DANISH PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EU

WORK PROGRAMME

WORKING PARTY ON HUMANITARIAN AID AND FOOD AID (COHAFA)

1 JULY – 31 DECEMBER 2025

1. INTRODUCTION

1. The global humanitarian system faces an unprecedented crisis that has been brought to the forefront by recent disruptive reductions in humanitarian funding and an increasing disregard for international humanitarian law. With the “Humanitarian Reset”, the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator has launched an ambitious reform process for the UN’s humanitarian response, which will in turn feed into the UN Secretary-General’s UN80 initiative. With the expected disengagement of the United States, the EU and its Member States are set to become the largest humanitarian donor in the world. As such, the EU and its Member States have a crucial role to play in accompanying and guiding the Humanitarian Reset in a manner that preserves the ability of not only the UN, but the entire international humanitarian ecosystem, to efficiently respond to humanitarian needs. The defence and promotion of international humanitarian law and of humanitarian principles must stay at the core of these efforts. In parallel, more needs to be done to ensure a sustainable reduction in vulnerabilities in order to decrease dependency on humanitarian assistance. At the same time, efforts to close the humanitarian funding gap will continue to be key.

2. The Danish Presidency will aim to enhance the collective impact of the EU and its Member States in the field of humanitarian assistance and reform, including by strengthening COHAFA's role as a policy forum, coordination platform on humanitarian diplomacy and advocate for a robust defence of core humanitarian principles¹. This includes ensuring continuity through the joint COHAFA Trio programme with trio partners Poland and Cyprus (January 2025 – June 2026) and holding a Director-level COHAFA meeting along with continuous cooperation with other Working Parties and Commission services, including the organisation of a joint COHAFA/CODEV-PI field trip.

2. **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

A. **DEFENDING HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES AND INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW**

3. In line with previous Council conclusions on IHL and on improved protection², the Danish Presidency will work dedicatedly for the defence and promotion of IHL and the humanitarian principles.

¹ Report on the Assessment of the mandate of the Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid, 20 January 2011 (17800/1/10) and COHAFA Working Methods, 20 December 2024 (WK 16324/2024 INIT)

² [Council calls for better protection in humanitarian aid; Humanitarian assistance and international humanitarian law: Council adopts conclusions](#)

4. Large-scale and systematic breaches of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) persist, while mechanisms to prevent and curtail such violations are increasingly perceived as ineffective. Violations include attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure in armed conflicts, denial of access for humanitarian organisations and aid workers to civilian populations in conflict zones, and direct targeting of humanitarian staff by state and non-state actors. 2024 was the deadliest year on record for humanitarian personnel with more than 360 humanitarian workers killed in 20 countries, over 36,000 civilian deaths during armed conflicts, widespread destruction of essential infrastructure, and over 122 million forcibly displaced people – the highest number recorded to date. We have in 2025 seen examples of humanitarian assistance being delivered in breach of the humanitarian principles with tragic consequences, reemphasizing their value and necessity for ensuring the safe, just and dignified delivery of humanitarian assistance.
- IHL, protection of civilians, specifically children, humanitarian principles, the protection of humanitarian workers and safeguarding humanitarian access will be systematically considered when discussing crises at COHAFA meetings.
 - Denmark engages actively as a strong humanitarian voice in the UN Security Council, and will build bridges with the Danish EU Presidency in the humanitarian field where relevant.

B. HUMANITARIAN RESET AND RELATED SYSTEM-WIDE PROCESSES

5. The Humanitarian Reset aims to refocus and improve the efficiency of UN interagency humanitarian responses in the light of the funding crisis. In combination with the wider reforms of the UN80-initiative, the Reset is expected to lead to significant changes for the humanitarian system globally and for responses at national level.

6. In implementing the Humanitarian Reset and UN80 initiative, it will be crucial to recognize and build on achievements made in the humanitarian and development sector over past decades, as promoted by the EU and its likeminded partners. These include the systematic integration of protection measures into all response, the increased focus on prevention, resilience and sustainable solutions wherever possible, and the prioritisation of inclusive and gender-responsive approaches, including the fight against gender-based violence. To be successful, moreover, the Humanitarian Reset needs to involve the broadest possible range of humanitarian actors from the onset. It must also engage with the broader development and peace-building systems.
7. The principle of humanity and ensuring a needs-based approach within and across humanitarian situations requires heightened attention in a context of dwindling humanitarian funds. As a major humanitarian donor, the EU and its Member States will have a significant influence on the overall allocation of global humanitarian funds and its match with the UN hyper-prioritization of the Global Humanitarian Overview (GHO).
 - The Danish Presidency will seek to ensure a collective, forward-leaning and dynamic EU engagement in ongoing global discussions about the Reset and system wide reform processes.
 - The Danish Presidency will continue to support the process of developing a more strategic approach to the humanitarian supply chain.
 - The Danish presidency will aim to provide EU and Member States with relevant updates on evolving global humanitarian needs and to further the exchange of allocation plans among ECHO and Member States for 2025 and beyond against the UN hyper-prioritization of the Global Humanitarian Overview.
 - A briefing on the draft EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) will be organized.
 - The Danish Presidency will promote the provision of more quality funding including through discussions related to various crises at COHAFA.

C. SECURING A SUSTAINABLE REDUCTION IN VULNERABILITY

8. Meticulous, needs-based prioritisation of available resources is critical for life-saving activities in crisis situations. At the same time, the Danish Presidency affirms that a sustainable reduction in humanitarian needs from the outset is crucial, as crisis situations often end up being protracted. The aim must be for crisis-affected populations to take charge of their own lives, with as little dependence on external assistance as possible.
- It will be a priority for the Danish Presidency to seek to build Team Europe approaches across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus. This is in the light of the Commission-wide integrated approach to fragility and in the interests of a more efficient use of collective resources and sustainable outcomes. At a joint COHAFA/CODEV-PI Directors' meeting, the Commission will contribute to achieving this objective, as will a joint EU services/ODI/Presidency workshop during the presidency.
 - The Danish Presidency will put a focus on the opportunities to strengthen efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian aid, through transferring financial resources to the local level through measures such as direct support to institutional actors and increased use of multipurpose cash assistance with a view to encourage best practice approaches among Member States.

D. RESPONDING TO HUMANITARIAN NEEDS THROUGH INNOVATIVE SOURCES OF FINANCE

9. The reverse of a decade-long upward trend in humanitarian assistance and a marked fall in private donations (from USD 10.9 billion in 2022 to USD 7 billion in 2024) and a reliance on a relatively small numbers of major donors have made the humanitarian funding system vulnerable³. There is a growing need to mobilise funding beyond traditional donors.

³ [ALNAP/ODI: Global Humanitarian Assistance 2025](#)

- The Danish Presidency will continue working on the implementation of the 2023 Council Conclusions on addressing the humanitarian funding gap, emphasising in particular possibilities to accelerate the mobilisation of new forms of investments in crisis response and recovery, including at the local level, through i.a. deepening cooperation with development financing institutions, while also seeking a much greater involvement of the private sector through the use of insurance schemes, blended finance, etc.
- Further, avenues will be explored on how to increase the resource base in line with the Council Conclusions of May 2021 and explore views, priorities of non-traditional donors including on issues related to the Reset.

3. WORKING METHODS

10. To enhance the debate and knowledge sharing, the Danish Presidency will continue the practice of inviting experts, representatives of civil society and of international organisations to attend meetings, when relevant. Joint meetings with other Working Parties may be planned.
11. Based on a consultative process and with a view to presenting a wide range of subjects including crisis situations that are not featured high on the international agenda, the most serious and protracted crises will continue to be covered on a regular basis and joint messaging will be considered as needed.
12. To enhance information sharing, and in the interest of visibility and clarification, a short summary of key points from discussions ongoing in COHAFA will be continued. Also, to further promote common understanding of humanitarian and food aid issues flow of information to other Working Parties.
13. The Presidency will adapt the programme in response to evolving humanitarian priorities.

4. CALENDAR

1 July	Informal COHAFA meeting videoconference
16 – 17 July	Informal COHAFA meeting in Copenhagen
16 – 17 September	COHAFA meeting Directors' level
14 – 15 October	COHAFA meeting
12 November	COHAFA meeting (all day meeting due to WW1 commemorations on 11 November)
1 – 5 December	COHAFA/CODEV-PI field trip to Kenya
16 – 17 December	COHAFA meeting

5. OTHER MEETINGS

1 – 2 July	Humanitarian Leadership Group on Supply Chain –Workshop on Digitalisation, Geneva
16 July	Presentation of the Presidency programme to the European Parliament Committee on Development (DEVE), Brussels
1 - 2 September	Informal Development DGs meeting, Copenhagen
8 – 11 September	Humanitarian Leadership Group on Supply Chain –Workshops on Preparedness and Localisation, Copenhagen
29 – 30 September	Informal FAC Development, Copenhagen
September/October	Senior Official Meeting (SOM) on the Sahel
30 October	Voice/Global Focus: Shaping the EU's humanitarian and development agenda: From Lessons to Action, Copenhagen
13 November	EU services/ODI/Presidency workshop on fragility
21 November	FAC Development
22 November	Ministerial Round Table on the Sahel (tbc)
December	Humanitarian Leadership Group on Supply Chain – high level conference

6. INDICATIVE CALENDAR OF MAIN HUMANITARIAN EVENTS

(updates are forthcoming)

September

2 – 5 September UNICEF Executive Board (New York)

October

13 October Ministerial Meeting G20 DRR WG (Cape Town, South Africa)

November

17 – 21 November WFP Executive Board (Rome)

19 – 20 November Rome EWIPA (explosive weapons in populated areas) conference
(San José, Costa Rica)

10 – 21 November COP 30 United Nations Climate Change Conference (Belém, Brazil)

December

2 – 4 December Anticipation Hub: Anticipatory Action Global Dialogue Platform
(Berlin)

7. DANISH COHAFA TEAM

Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Charlotte Just (chair)

Ditte Krogh Olesen (national delegate)

Permanent Representation in Brussels

Mathilde Øster Steffensen (focal point)
