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'I/A' ITEM NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 2)/Council
Subject:	Team Europe approach - Draft Council conclusions

1. In its indicative work programme for the Working Party on Development Cooperation and International Partnerships (WP CODEV-PI) the Spanish Presidency announced its intention to take stock of the implementation of the Team Europe Approach, three years and a half after its inception in April 2020.
2. Accordingly, WP CODEV-PI examined draft Council conclusions prepared by the Spanish Presidency and reached agreement at working party level on 14 November 2023.
3. In view of the above, the Permanent Representatives Committee is invited to confirm the agreement on the text as set out in the Annex to this note and to submit the text to the Council for approval.

Draft Council conclusions on the Team Europe approach

1. The Council underlines that since the establishment of the Team Europe approach, the world has been facing a series of interlocking crises, including Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as their ongoing consequences. These multiple crises are weakening the capacities of partner countries to tackle the persistent challenges of poverty, climate change and environmental degradation, conflict, food insecurity, growing inequalities and economic downturn, with serious repercussions for migration and forced displacement.
2. The Team Europe approach increases the capacity of the EU and its Member States to work together with partner countries to address these and other global challenges, mitigate their consequences and allow a social, green and digital transition, while upholding human rights, democracy, the rule of law and gender equality. The Team Europe approach also enhances coordination across the triple humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus.
3. The Council reaffirms its conclusions from 8 June 2020 and 23 April 2021 and underlines the extent of the contribution of the Team Europe approach to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement through, among other policies, the EU's and Member States' international partnerships, development cooperation and the Global Gateway Strategy. The EU and its Member States remain committed to responding with urgency to and engaging on a greater scale towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the targets of the Paris Agreement, in light of setbacks and overall insufficient progress, using all possible means, including mobilising the full potential of the European financial architecture for development.

4. The Council highlights that the Team Europe approach demonstrates the EU's global role, responsibility and solidarity, and considers that it is key to maximising development effectiveness, promoting Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) and implementing the 'Working Better Together' approach. The Team Europe approach is also a means to contribute to a more coherent, efficient, effective, visible and more impactful European Financial Architecture for Development. Alongside reforming the global financial architecture and building on the New European Consensus on Development, delivering on global commitments remains a cornerstone of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Global Gateway Strategy.
5. The Council underlines the importance of the Team Europe approach for coordinated strategic communication and for the visibility of EU joint actions.
6. The Council considers that it is timely to take stock of the Team Europe approach, within the context of the evolution of European development cooperation. During this period, the EU has adopted its Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe (NDICI-GE) and has launched the Global Gateway Strategy. The Council considers that there is room for the Team Europe approach to be improved and further integrated into the EU's development architecture. The Council looks forward to the results of the NDICI-GE mid-term evaluation, which will provide further important insights into how the instrument supports the EU's external action, its development cooperation policy and its international partnerships.
7. The Council recognises that the Team Europe approach has been useful and has provided the necessary flexibility to adapt and respond to the demands imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the climate crisis and other global challenges. It has also proven to be beneficial in promoting joint actions in support of shared objectives and values of the EU, its Member States and partner countries, by forming multi-stakeholder coalitions.

8. The implementation of the Global Gateway Strategy, launched in 2021, has strongly benefitted from the Team Europe approach to mobilise up to EUR 300 billion in investments by the end of the MFF. It has improved the identification, implementation and communication of joint comprehensive initiatives by bringing together EU and Member States' expertise, development finance institutions and the private sector. While emphasising the core values and best practices of the EU, the Team Europe approach is used as the main mode of delivery for the Global Gateway.
9. The Council is determined to improve and intensify the implementation of the Team Europe approach by connecting all three of its main methods that fall within it, namely Joint Programming (JP), Joint Implementation (JI) and Team Europe Initiatives (TEIs), and, where relevant, a combination of all three, building upon good practices and lessons learnt from the implementation of JP and TEIs. The Council remains committed to the principles of "Working Better Together" approach and stresses the importance of monitoring and evaluating the process from the angle of inclusiveness.
10. The Team Europe approach should serve as a comprehensive toolbox that brings together different EU and Member States' modalities and instruments – while respecting existing decision-making procedures and the respective institutional competences of stakeholders of the Team Europe approach– in order to adequately apply key principles of development effectiveness. The implementation of the Team Europe approach should adopt a human rights-based approach and contribute to all the objectives and targets set by the NDICI-GE Regulation. The Council recalls the commitment made under the NDICI-GE Regulation to ensure that at least 85 % of new actions implemented have gender equality as a principal or a significant objective.

11. The Council emphasises the importance of increased coordination among Team Europe approach stakeholders, guided by the ‘policy first’ principle during programming and implementation and respecting their strategies, policies and instruments. This requires increased strategic guidance by the Council with regard to the policy objectives and priorities of the NDICI-GE, in order to strengthen coherence, consistency and complementarity with other relevant EU instruments and policies in pursuit of the EU’s values and interests. The Council calls on all members of the Team Europe approach to take all necessary steps to ensure that the Team Europe approach is up to this demanding task.
12. The update of the ‘Working Better Together as Team Europe’ guidance¹ will be a key contribution to this endeavour. The Council will continue to provide strategic guidance regarding policy dialogue, governance, working methods, and monitoring and evaluation, while maintaining lean processes.
13. The Council, recalling its conclusions of 23 April 2021 on Team Europe², provides the following strategic guidance for the Team Europe approach to strengthen partnerships, policy coherence, and ultimately enhance development effectiveness. The Council hereby calls for:
 - a. The use of the Team Europe approach as the preferred option whenever feasible for the EU’s and its Member States’ development cooperation and partnerships, maximising effectiveness and policy coherence for reaching the SDGs and implementing the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement. This approach should continue to be used to combine all relevant elements of the EU’s and its Member States’ international partnerships and development cooperation with the aim of fostering inclusiveness and collaboration with and among Member States.

¹ [Working Better Together as Team Europe Through joint programming and joint implementation - Tools and Methods Series Guidelines N° 10](#) (January 2021, ISSN 1977-8309)

² ST 7894/2021

- b. The strengthening of Joint Programming in its different elements as the preferred approach for country programming, drawing on the collaborative momentum and the new strategic paradigm brought about by the TEIs and the Global Gateway. JP should be kept voluntary, flexible, inclusive and tailored to the context of the partner country. The reintroduction of the mapping of planned JP processes should complement national programming documents for interested Member States.
- c. The support for partner countries in achieving the SDGs by aligning the TEIs and Global Gateway projects with the objectives and priorities of partner countries' national development plans and strategies. The increase of local ownership, alignment, harmonisation within a Team Europe approach, results orientation, impact and mutual accountability through policy dialogue with partner countries on local, national and regional development policies and objectives, coordinated on the ground by the EU Delegations with the most inclusive possible involvement of Member States.
- d. The promotion of democratic values and high standards, good governance and transparency and the fight against corruption as integral elements of strengthening the efficiency, transparency and concrete results of Team Europe's development efforts in partner countries
- e. The organisation of high-level policy dialogues, Team Europe missions, political engagements and participation in high-level and investment events in partner countries and multilateral fora. This has the potential to reinforce strategic communication and visibility through a Team Europe approach, including in view of the fight against disinformation campaigns. EU Delegations and Member States' embassies have a key role to play in proposing initiatives and identifying the most relevant milestones for Team Europe missions to be organised and in coordinating communication efforts.
- f. The promotion of the EU as a reliable, value-driven partner through a joint European narrative on global development by communicating on key priorities and results in a Team Europe approach, using established and effective channels to reach both specialised and non-specialised audiences.

- g. The regular provision of strategic guidance by Member States through relevant Council bodies, on strategic priorities to be pursued under the Team Europe approach, in particular in the implementation of the NDICI-GE instrument and the Global Gateway Strategy, ensuring that transparent decision-making, coherent governance and inclusive implementation are key components of the Team Europe approach.
- h. The further increase of the inclusiveness and efficiency of TEIs to make full use of knowledge, skills, capacities, expertise and political resources of all participants. EU delegations should act as coordinators on the ground for the dialogue on the application and implementation of the Team Europe approach and TEIs, in coordination with Member States' embassies. EU delegations should ensure proper and timely information flow and contribute to the inclusion particularly of those Member States without representation on the ground. EU Delegations should also facilitate Team Europe joint visits to partner countries and joint fora with their authorities. National, regional and global TEIs in particular should maintain efficient and lean governance and management structures in order to facilitate the participation of Team Europe actors, while taking into account partner countries' priorities and ensuring their ownership.
- i. Joint efforts with other actors in a multi-stakeholder approach to maximise development impact. These include the United Nations and other international organisations, multilateral and regional development banks, financial institutions, other donor countries, civil society, NGOs, human rights defenders, local authorities and communities, the private sector and knowledge institutions.
- j. The promotion of engagement along the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (HDP Nexus) in fragile and crisis-affected contexts. The HDP Nexus is the internationally recognised standard to further the efficiency, sustainability and effectiveness of humanitarian, development and peace action, including short-term and long-term investments as well as political, diplomatic and security actions. In line with recent studies by the European Commission, the policy and the operational framework of the HDP Nexus should be further developed.

- k. The application of the Team Europe Initiatives Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation Framework (MORE) in the planning, design and implementation of new and ongoing TEIs in order to assess their contribution to development impact and provide data on the overall results of TEIs for public communication purposes. To this end, the TEI Tracker should always be kept up to date. The Commission services and the EEAS should provide the Council with detailed information on the implementation of the Team Europe approach on a regular basis and consult Member States on the modalities of its implementation.
14. The Council remains committed to regularly assessing progress and impact in the implementation of the Team Europe approach following these Council conclusions.
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