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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: French Presidency of the Council of the European Union
Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA)
Work Programme of Trio Presidency
France – Czech Republic – Sweden
1 January 2022 – 30 June 2023

Delegations will find in annex work programme of the Trio Presidency France – Czech Republic – Sweden for the Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA) for the period January 2022 – June 2023.

FRENCH PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

WORKING PARTY ON HUMANITARIAN AID AND FOOD AID (COHAFA)

WORK PROGRAMME OF TRIO PRESIDENCY

FRANCE – CZECH REPUBLIC – SWEDEN

1 January 2022 – 30 June 2023

Throughout their Trio Presidency, France, the Czech Republic and Sweden would like their cooperation to contribute to the advancement of humanitarian dialogue within COHAFA.

This Trio Programme presents the topics identified as priorities in the response to humanitarian crises, which will guide the work of our three presidencies.

The current COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences – socio-economic, in particular – as well as the alarming impact of climate change on humanitarian needs and the shrinking humanitarian space will drive discussions in COHAFA sessions in the coming months. We will also support the implementation of the Council Conclusions on the Commission’s Communication on the ‘*EU’s humanitarian action: new challenges, same principles*’ and will strive to ensure follow up on the Communication and Council Conclusions through a progress report to be drawn up and published on an annual basis. Furthermore, our Trio will focus on the cross-cutting issue of gender in humanitarian action.

I. PROMOTION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

Following in the footsteps of the previous Trio, we will ensure that international humanitarian law (IHL) remains at the core of COHAFA's work programme, in conjunction with COJUR and within the respective mandates of these committees. The European Humanitarian Forum, which is to be held in January 2022 and jointly organised by the European Commission and France, should be a landmark of this Trio, especially as regards the promotion and respect of IHL.

The protection of humanitarian workers and the preservation of humanitarian space and access will guide the Trio's programme. We will work towards establishing a European dialogue on access to financial services for humanitarian actors and increasing the EU's policy flexibility in safeguarding humanitarian aid.

II. A GENDER-BASED APPROACH

The Trio would like to further discuss how gender should be included in the elaboration of the response to humanitarian crises and more systematically in DG ECHO and MS funding. We will particularly focus on a rights-based approach to addressing sexual and gender-based violence, promoting sexual reproductive health and rights and ensuring access to sexual and reproductive health services in times of crisis and conflict. As a follow-up to the previous Trio, discussions could also focus on promoting a more inclusive and sensitive humanitarian response for women and girls and empowerment of women in the humanitarian response. A review of the European Humanitarian Consensus in the light of current concerns and challenges could be undertaken.

III. HUMANITARIAN-DEVELOPMENT-PEACE NEXUS

In cooperation with other relevant WPs, COHAFA will focus on the triple nexus as a cross-cutting approach which contributes to the reduction of humanitarian needs. Based on the evaluation of the pilot phase of the nexus implementation, we will prepare the ground for the gradual use of this approach in all relevant countries and regions.

IV. STRENGTHENING THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE DIMENSION OF THE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

In 2020, 15.7 million people faced a crisis situation due to extreme weather events. According to the World Bank, up to 216 million people could migrate worldwide by 2050 to flee the negative effects of climate change such as reduced agricultural production, water scarcity and rising sea levels. In order to mitigate such humanitarian crises, donors and operators must therefore, on the one hand, develop a humanitarian response that is accountable for its climate and environmental footprint, and on the other hand, act ahead of crises by accelerating the mainstreaming of anticipatory humanitarian action and by integrating disaster risk reduction and resilience into their priorities and modalities of action.

V. OPERATIONALISING HUMANITARIAN AID

The Trio will focus on enhancing inclusive, efficient and effective humanitarian aid. Our Trio welcomes the proposal to develop a humanitarian response capacity in order, as mentioned in the Communication from the Commission on the EU's humanitarian action, to *'fill in gaps, as necessary, enabling the EU Member States and humanitarian partners to rapidly deliver humanitarian assistance, in coordination and complementarity with the Union Civil Protection Mechanism'*.

VI. RESPOND TO THE GROWING GAP BETWEEN HUMANITARIAN NEEDS AND AVAILABLE HUMANITARIAN FINANCING

The Council conclusions adopted in response to the European Commission’s Communication state that there is an ‘urgent need to enhance global efforts to significantly increase the resource base for humanitarian action, as well as the importance of delivering humanitarian aid more efficiently with available resources’. The Trio Presidency will focus on strengthening support for innovative approaches to funding and better inclusion of the private sector in the response to humanitarian crises. The Trio will also work on outreach to non-traditional donors, building on the *COHABA common approach to the outreach to new and non-traditional donors* developed during the German Presidency. In addition, the Trio will seek to expand the donor base and work towards greater responsibility-sharing within the EU by, for example, exploring concrete actions related to monitoring, benchmarks and sharing data on national humanitarian budgets, including ‘soft’ reporting by Member States.
