



Council of the
European Union

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12721/16

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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: Outcome of proceedings of the Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and
Food Aid on 8 and 9 September 2016

Delegation will find attached the outcome of proceedings of the Working Party on Humanitarian
Aid and Food Aid held on 8 and 9 September 2016.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

2. Lebanon (*including an informal exchange of views with UNRWA; COHAFA was joined by MaMa for this item*)

As part of an informal exchange of views, UNRWA's Director of operations in Lebanon, Matthias Schmale, presented on the on-going challenges faced by Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, stressing that UNRWA is providing government-like services to them such as education and healthcare. In view of severe restrictions for Palestinian refugees in accessing jobs and owning property, he underlined that offering dignified livelihood opportunities was the best way to avoid the spread of radicalisation. Member States expressed their support for UNRWA's operations in Lebanon. In response to questions on education and possible 'competition' between Syrian and Palestinian refugees, Mr Schmale pointed to the success of UNRWA schooling programmes and stressed the importance of dealing with the long-term aspects of the protracted Syrian crisis.

3. Afghanistan

The Commission made a presentation on the humanitarian implications of what appears to be a strengthening of policy vis-à-vis Afghan refugees in Pakistan, which is resulting in thousands of non-voluntary repatriations. Returnees are likely to try to settle in major Afghan cities which are ill-prepared to host them. The Commission made a number of advocacy recommendations and stressed the need to support the UN Flash Appeal.

4. European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 15/2016: "Did the Commission effectively manage the Humanitarian aid provided to populations affected by conflicts in the African Great Lakes Region?"

The Court of Auditors' (CoA) Principal Managers in charge of the audit presented the main findings of this Special Report issued on 4 July. Overall, the Commission's management of Humanitarian aid in the African Great Lakes Region was found to have been effective. The Court nevertheless issued a list of recommendations on the selection procedure, the monitoring mechanism, and results and forward action aimed at improving future practices. The Commission and the Member States welcomed the report and held an exchange of views on some of the recommendations. The Presidency announced that COHAFA would prepare draft Council conclusions on the Special Report.

5. Humanitarian-Development Nexus (*incl. an informal exchange of views with UNHCR*)

Emmy Takahashi of UNHCR Brussels briefed on aspects of forced displacement related to the humanitarian-development nexus, and presented new UNHCR studies undertaken in partnership with the World Bank and other actors. Listing a number of key drivers of forced displacement and suggested ways to respond, she also pointed to new initiatives within UNHCR to improve response, such as new internal processes for needs assessments, planning, programming and monitoring, as well as strategic multi-year planning.

6. Area C

The Commission provided an update on the latest trends and figures regarding demolitions and confiscations of humanitarian assets, which are already considerably higher this year than in the whole of 2015. The group held an exchange of views on humanitarian advocacy needs on the issue.

7. Iraq

The Commission briefed the Working Party on developments on the ground and in particular the progressive shift of the battlefront towards the Mosul Corridor, which could potentially trigger the single largest humanitarian crisis of 2016, with a worst-case scenario of over 1.6 million additional IDPs. The Commission stressed the importance of planning for the day after the Mosul offensive. Delegations emphasised the need for civil-military coordination and for donors to follow up on their pledges made in Washington, DC.

8. AOB

a) UNGA 71

The Commission and Member States briefed on relevant meetings during the forthcoming UNGA 71 ministerial week:

b) Food Assistance Convention mission to Haiti

The Commission debriefed on the FAC mission in June which allowed FAC members to see how coordination on cash-based and resilience programmes worked in Haiti, in terms of both linking up humanitarian and development assistance and coordination between FAC signatory countries.

c) Gender - Women's empowerment in emergencies - Debrief from the Presidency workshop (Brussels, 7 September 2016) Syria

The Presidency debriefed on the workshop held on 7 September, which focused on three main thematic priorities: Research and implementation, policy and practice, and international progress and policy frameworks.

d) Syria

The Commission provided a brief update on the situation in and around Aleppo, stressing that the UN Appeal is only 42% funded. The UK delegation encouraged all Member States to follow up on their pledges made at the London Syria Conference in February, and briefed about the follow-up event during the UNGA 71 ministerial week.

e) Berm/Jordan

The Commission provided an update on the dire humanitarian situation of around 70,000 Syrian refugees, most of whom women and children, currently caught in the border region between Syria and Jordan.

f) Delegates Portal

The Council Secretariat presented a short video about the novelties of Delegates Portal, which has replaced Extranet as the distribution system for Council and Working Party documents.

g) Yemen

The Commission briefed on the findings of field mission to Sana'a from 5-7 September where he witnessed an increasingly dire humanitarian situation in a country facing both armed conflict as well as an 'economic war'. The Commission stressed the need to step up funding for this Level-3 crisis as humanitarian partners are still able to deliver, despite facing increasing administrative restrictions in the north and a lack of safety in the south.

h) Niger/Nigeria

Androulla Kaminara, the new ECHO Director of Operations in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Caribbean and the Pacific, debriefed COHAFA on her visit to Niger/Nigeria in early September, underlining the humanitarian challenges in both countries.

i) Grand Bargain Sherpa meeting (Bonn, 5-6 September 2016)

The Commission and the German delegation debriefed on the Grand Bargain Sherpa meeting held in Bonn on 5 and 6 September.

j) Revision of the European Consensus on Development

The Commission briefed on the revision process of the European Consensus on Development, announcing that they will present a proposal for a revised Consensus on 22 November.