



Council of the
European Union

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8479/17

COHAFA 32
DEVGEN 67
ALIM 2
ONU 60
FAO 7
COAFR 104
MAMA 78
MOG 26
COEST 87
COASI 50
PROCIV 37
RELEX 340

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 19 and 20 January 2017

Delegation will find attached the outcome of proceedings of the Working Party on Humanitarian
Aid and Food Aid held on 19 and 20 January 2017.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda (CM 1070/1/17 REV 1) was adopted. An AOB item on the humanitarian situation in Venezuela was added at the request of a delegation.

2. Presentation of the COHAFA work programme of the Maltese Presidency

The Presidency outlined its work programme for the six months ahead (ST 5119/17).

3. World Humanitarian Summit/Implementation of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid-Way forward

The Presidency informed that at each of the first five meetings during the semester, WHS follow-up in one of the five WHS Core Responsibility Areas would be discussed, so that by early May the collective progress by Member States and the EU in implementing their WHS commitments would be assessed. The Commission outlined the synergies between the Consensus Implementation Plan (CIP) and the WHS follow-up process.

4. Follow-up to WHS Core Responsibility #1: Prevent and End Conflict

The Commission and the EEAS briefed on progress in implementing the eight EU commitments that had been made under this Core Responsibility. The Commission briefed on the work towards a new Consensus on Development as well as enhanced coordination between ECHO and DEVCO in the field and at headquarters. They also gave an update on their cooperation with the EEAS regarding the implementation of the EU's *Comprehensive Approach to External Conflicts and Crises* and on the Early Warning System. The EEAS informed that the EU Global Strategy calls for more effective action at all stages of the conflict cycle, prompt action on prevention, and investing in mitigation, stabilisation and peacebuilding. The EEAS also informed about their increased coordination on conflict prevention and resolution at UN level. Delegations were invited to share information on the early warning systems they use and the state of implementation of their WHS commitments under Core Responsibility #1.

5. Responses to crises

a) **Mediterranean/Libya** (*incl. an informal exchange of views with UNHCR and IOM*)

As part of an informal exchange of views, UNHCR and IOM jointly briefed COHAFA on their work and the challenges they face in the Mediterranean region, with a particular focus on Libya as key point of departure for refugees and migrants along the Central Mediterranean Route. Key challenges include: improving migrants' security and livelihood opportunities in Libya, including in detention centres; disrupting the European market for human trafficking; informing people on the move of the dangers ahead; and offering better livelihood opportunities in their African home countries.

b) **Algeria/Sahrawi**

The Commission updated on the long-lasting and "forgotten" humanitarian crisis affecting the Sahrawi refugees who live in dire camp conditions in the western Algerian desert. The group then discussed advocacy needs in view of persistent impediments to the work of humanitarian INGOs supporting the Sahrawi.

6. WFP Executive Board, First Regular Session (Rome, 20-24 February)

The group discussed on which agenda items statements on behalf of the EU and its Member States should be prepared.

7. Responses to crises: Middle East

a) **Yemen** (*incl. an informal exchange of views with OCHA*)

As part of an informal exchange of views, Jaime McGoldrick, UN Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator, updated on the humanitarian crisis in Yemen which affects 18.8 million people and is deteriorating further due to unabated armed conflict and a collapsing economy. Yemenis are facing human rights abuses, targeted killing of civilians, soaring child starvation, lack of access to healthcare, and economic suffocation. Mr McGoldrick stressed the importance of re-opening Sana'a airport for commercial and medical-evacuation flights. Member States shared their deep concern over this humanitarian catastrophe and discussed advocacy needs, including regarding the respect for international humanitarian law (IHL), humanitarian access and reopening the country's ports and airports for economic activities. In view of this discussion, the group decided to agree common messages on the humanitarian situation in Yemen.

b) Syria and the region (Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt and Turkey)

The Commission provided an update on the humanitarian situation in Syria, including in Aleppo. The Commission also informed about a series of key meetings under the political process as well as a follow-up meeting to the February 2016 London conference to be hosted in Brussels in April. The Finnish delegation informed that Finland and the UN were organising a conference on “Supporting Syrians and the Region” in Helsinki on 24 January.

c) Iraq

The group was briefed by the Commission on the humanitarian situation in and around Mosul, and discussed the continued need to ensure the respect for IHL, civilians' access to safety, humanitarian access for delivery of principled assistance to all those in need, and sufficiently high standards in IDP camps.

d) Palestine¹

The Commission briefed on the humanitarian situation in the Gaza strip and provided an update on the figures on demolitions and confiscations of humanitarian assets in Area C in 2016 and in January 2017. On this basis the group discussed draft common messages on the humanitarian approach in Area C in view of the continued demolitions and confiscations of humanitarian assets.

8. AOB

a) Western Balkans

The group discussed the humanitarian needs of some 1,200 migrants and refugees who for months have been sleeping rough in dire winter conditions in central Belgrade. The Commission briefed on the EU response and announced that Commissioner Stylianides would visit Serbia on 21 January

b) Ukraine

The Commission briefed on the worsening humanitarian situation in the country which is expected to affect around 3.8 millions people in 2017, around 700,000 more than last year. Concerns remain regarding humanitarian access, water supplies, the suspension of social payments and the continued needs of internally displaced people. The group discussed advocacy needs in this regard.

¹ This designation shall not be construed as a recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

c) Upcoming meetings

The Commission briefed about key humanitarian-related aspects at the following forthcoming events:

- WHO Executive Board (Geneva, 23 January - 1 February)
- UNDP Executive Board (New York, 30 January - 3 February)
- Humanitarian Networks and Partnership Week (Geneva, 6-10 February)
- UNICEF Executive Board, First Regular Session (New York, 7-9 February)

d) Venezuela

The Commission briefed about the humanitarian situation in the country based on preliminary information on key health and nutrition indicators gathered through an ECHO-funded project.
