



Council of the
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8490/17

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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 16 and 17 March 2017

Delegation will find attached the outcome of proceedings of the Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid held on 16 and 17 March 2017.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted (CM 1903/2017 REV1). AOB items were added on the Emergency Support Instrument and a debriefing on the intervention by the Commission's Director-General for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations at the PSC on 7 March.

2. Palestine (COHAFA was joined by MaMa for this item)

a) Update on the humanitarian situation *(including an informal exchange of views with UNRWA and NRC)*

As part of an informal exchange of views Scott Andersen, UNRWA Director of Operations for the West Bank, briefed the groups on the dire situation in the Gaza strip, including on challenges such as the overcrowded refugee camps, high unemployment, and a loss of faith in the two-state solution. He also updated on the record number of demolitions of humanitarian structures in the West Bank in 2016, provided details on demolition orders facing the Bedouin community, and pointed to UNRWA's funding shortfall. NRC Country Director Mr Hanibal Abiy Worku complemented the update on Gaza, stressing that under the continued economic blockage it was on a de-development trajectory. He encouraged Member States to supply aid irrespective of progress on intra-Palestinian reconciliation, to create exceptions to counter-terrorism measures hampering the provision of aid, and to support shelter projects in Gaza. He also recalled that 54% of the 2014 Cairo pledges remain unfulfilled.

b) Area C

The EEAS provided an update on the situation in Area C in light of recent trends regarding demolitions of humanitarian structures as well as two recent statements by the High Representative in response to the announcement of further settlement expansion and the adoption of the Regularisation Law.

3. Follow-up to the World Humanitarian Summit

a) Core Responsibility #3: leave no one behind *(including an informal exchange of views with WFP)*

The Commission updated on its implementation of the EU WHS commitments with regard to education, notably the 6% humanitarian-budget target for 2017 as well as education funding worth €200m from the Madad Trust Fund and €550m under the Facility for Refugees in Turkey. The Commission also gave a presentation on the implementation of the EU approach on forced displacement and development.

As part of an informal exchange of views, Kenn Crossley, Deputy Director, Programme and Policy, WFP gave a presentation on the implementation and future timeframe of the Emergency Social Safety Net for Syrian refugees in Turkey.

b) Reporting on commitments

The group held an exchange of views on reporting on the implementation of the EU's and Member States' commitments for the World Humanitarian Summit.

4. Response to crises

a) Syria

On the basis of an update by the Commission, the group discussed recent developments regarding the humanitarian situation in the country, notably with regard to intensified fighting in the Damascus area as well as the situation in and around Raqqa. The Commission as well as the German and UK delegations briefed on the forthcoming Brussels Syria conference on 5 April, which will feature a humanitarian side event on 4 April.

b) Venezuela

The Commission briefed on the deteriorating situation in the country with regard to the food and health sectors as well as alarming trends of violence and challenges related to migration. The group discussed funding needs as well as the possibility to provide funding via the Commission's External Assigned Revenues scheme.

5. Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (Cancún, 22-26 May) (*COHAFA joined PROCIV for this item*)

a) Update on the Global Platform

The Commission presented the state of play of preparations for this UN meeting in Mexico, which will be the first occasion for the global community to take stock of the 2015 Sendai agreement. This meeting will be preceded by the European Open Forum on DRR in Istanbul on 27-28 March.

b) Discussion of elements for the draft EU statement

The two Working Parties examined elements for the draft statement to be delivered by Commissioner Stylianides on behalf of the EU and its Member States. The Presidency informed that the statement would be finalised within the PROCIV Working Party.

6. Draft Council conclusions on Court of Auditors Special Report no 33/2016 (*COHAFA joined PROCIV for this item*)

The two groups discussed the humanitarian-related aspects of draft Council Conclusions in response to this Court of Auditors Special report. PROCIV continued the discussion of the other elements of the draft conclusions without COHAFA delegates.

7. AOB

a) "Refugee Crisis in Greece" workshop (*COHAFA joined PROCIV for this item*)

The Commission invited civil protection and humanitarian aid experts to attend the above workshop, hosted by Greece and co-financed by the Commission. The meeting will take stock of the activations of both the Union Civil Protection Mechanism and the Emergency Support Regulation for the refugee crisis in Greece.

b) Yemen

The Commission updated on recent developments regarding the humanitarian situation in Yemen. The EEAS informed the group about ongoing diplomatic efforts. The Swedish delegation informed that they would co-host, together with Switzerland, a pledging conference in Geneva on 25 April.

c) Ukraine

The Commission debriefed about Commissioner Stylianides's visit to Ukraine on 19-21 February, which included meetings in Kiev as well as field visits, including close to the contact line. The Commission also debriefed on a mission in early March by relevant Directors from ECHO, NEAR and the EEAS. In view of these visits, humanitarian advocacy needs were discussed.

d) Debriefing "Friends of Mali" teleconference

The Commission debriefed about a teleconference on the humanitarian situation in Mali held on 17 February which involved a number of EU Member States as well as representatives of the United States.

e) Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination Standards

The Commission presented the state of play of the work on the standards, which the 9 February meeting in Geneva had been unable to endorse, and the timeline for working towards endorsement of the guidelines in February 2018.

f) Meeting of EU Directors-General for Humanitarian Aid

The Commission briefed delegations on this meeting, which will take place in Brussels on 6 April.

g) EDRIS

The Commission presented the state of play of the 2017/18 Action Plan for improving the EDRIS humanitarian funding database. A first consultation with interested Member States will take place in the last week of April.

h) European Solidarity Corps

The Commission provided an update on the implementation of the first phase of the initiative as well as an outlook on forthcoming consultations in preparation of the second phase, with a legislative proposal due to be presented by the Commission in May.

i) Council Regulation (EU) 2016/369 on the provision of emergency support within the Union b(*COHAFA joined PROCIV for this item*)

The Commission presented its report on the implementation of the Regulation, adopted on 15 March (ST 7395/17), in accordance of Article 8 of the Regulation, 12 months after its adoption by the Council and immediate activation for the refugee crisis in Greece.

j) Discussion of humanitarian crises at PSC on 7 March

COHAFA was debriefed by the Commission on the intervention the Director-General for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations at the PSC on 7 March, where she had stressed the unprecedented global humanitarian needs, the erosion of respect for IHL and growing access restrictions for humanitarian actors. The Director-General had also highlighted the need for resolving conflicts and for donors to share the burden equitably. The UK delegation identified the humanitarian crises in Syria and the region as well as the (near-)famine situations in Yemen, Nigeria, Somalia and South Sudan as the most pressing humanitarian challenges today, stressing the need for all donors to scale up funding and push for political solutions: early warning needed to be followed by early action. There was a need to apply the humanitarian principles and commitments made under the Grand Bargain.