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COHAFA 57

NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
Subject: **Indicative work programme of the Austrian Presidency for the Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA) - July-December 2018.**

Delegations will find attached document "Indicative work programme of the Austrian Presidency for the Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA) - July-December 2018.

**Indicative work programme of the Austrian Presidency for the
Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA)**

July – December 2018

The Austrian Presidency will pursue the implementation of the Trio Programme (EE, BG, AT)¹ in the field of humanitarian assistance. The Presidency will seek to ensure that full use is made of COHAFA as the main forum within the EU for strategic and policy debate, information sharing and coordination with regard to humanitarian aid. The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid and the humanitarian principles will continue to guide COHAFA's work throughout the Austrian Presidency. Special emphasis will be placed on forced displacement, and on the promotion of more coherent approaches, including the approach to improving the link between humanitarian assistance and development cooperation. Other priorities will include gender-sensitive aid, strengthening protection, and advocacy for compliance with International Humanitarian Law (IHL).

A. MAIN PRIORITIES

- **Response to crises**

Under the Austrian Presidency, COHAFA will continue to facilitate and encourage information sharing and coordination with regard to emerging, ongoing and forgotten humanitarian crises. The practice of formulating common humanitarian messages which allow Member States, the Commission and the EEAS to speak with one voice, will be continued. In line with established practice, and depending on the topic, COHAFA will involve other working parties in the analysis of humanitarian crises.

¹ 9934/17

- **Humanitarian-Development Nexus**

In line with previous presidencies, the Austrian Presidency will promote discussions on achieving better complementarity between humanitarian assistance and development cooperation, including on operationalising the humanitarian-development nexus.² The Commission and the EEAS will be invited to regularly update the group on the nexus implementation in the six pilot countries, so as to enable Member States to be actively involved in the rollout. Where appropriate, discussions will be held jointly with the Working Party on Development.

- **Forced displacement**

Over 65.6 million people worldwide are in need of protection and assistance as a consequence of forced displacement, including Internally Displaced Persons, whose situation remains precarious. The 20th anniversary of the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (GP20) should also serve to reflect on strategies for improving the implementation of these principles.

Tackling the root causes of forced displacement, saving lives and helping meet immediate humanitarian needs is crucial. At the same time it is also important to strengthen the long-term resilience of forcibly displaced persons and the countries and communities hosting them. The Austrian Presidency will continue to promote the implementation of the EU's development-led approach to forced displacement³ and will follow closely the development of the UN Global Compact on Refugees to be adopted by the UN.

- **Follow-up to the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS)**

Building on the work of previous presidencies, the Austrian Presidency will promote discussions and exchanges on the follow-up of the implementation of WHS-related commitments and initiatives by the EU and its Member States. This includes the Grand Bargain between humanitarian donors and implementing organisations.

² 9383/17

³ 8832/16

B. OTHER PRIORITIES

- **Gender dimension in humanitarian aid**

The Austrian Presidency will highlight the importance of integrating gender considerations into humanitarian aid, including the need to ensure that sexual and gender-based violence is prevented and mitigated in humanitarian crises. The Presidency will invite the Commission to update the group on its leadership of the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies. Links will also be made to the women, peace and security agenda.

- **Strengthening the protection of civilians and compliance with IHL**

Compliance with IHL and adherence to the humanitarian principles is indispensable to saving lives, alleviating suffering and preserving human dignity during and after armed conflict as well as in other situations of violence. The Presidency will highlight protection needs, including access requirements, and will organise informal exchanges with experts and practitioners. Advocacy for the respect of IHL, and in particular humanitarian access and the safety and security of humanitarian and medical workers, will continue to play a key role in the formulation of common humanitarian messages where appropriate.

- **Education in emergencies**

Education for children in crisis and post-crisis situations will also be a focus. Half of the world's out-of-school children live in countries affected by humanitarian crises. Without access to education, children and youth are at risk of becoming a lost generation. Following the adoption of the Commission Communication on Education in Emergencies and Protracted Crises⁴, the Austrian Presidency will guide discussions on draft Council conclusions on this topic.

- **Nutrition and food security**

Nutrition and food security will remain central humanitarian issues under the Austrian Presidency. In line with agreed procedures, COHAFA will continue to prepare statements on behalf of the EU and its Member States for the meetings of the World Food Programme Executive Board.

⁴ 9408/18

Indicative calendar of meetings

		a.m.	p.m.
COHAFA	12 July	x	x
	13 July	x	
COHAFA	3 September		x
	4 September	x	x
Informal COHAFA in Vienna	19 September	x	x
	20 September	x	
COHAFA	11 October	x	x
	12 October	x	
COHAFA	8 November	x	x
	9 November	x	
COHAFA	6 December	tbc	x
	7 December	x	

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