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Subject: Council Conclusions on EU Human Rights Guidelines on Safe Drinking
Water and Sanitation

Delegations will find attached Council Conclusions on EU Human Rights Guidelines on Safe
Drinking Water and Sanitation adopted by the Council at its 3700. meeting held on 17 June 2019.

**Council Conclusions on
EU Human Rights Guidelines on Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation**

1. The Council reaffirms the EU's commitment to the purpose and principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which applies to all human beings without distinction of any kind, as well as to the promotion and protection of all human rights, whether civil and political, or economic, social and cultural.
2. While bearing in mind that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, the Council recalls Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) which entitles everyone to an adequate standard of living, and that the UN General Assembly recognises the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation. The Council also recalls the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development commitment to “leave no one behind” and in particular Sustainable Development Goal 6 to “Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all“.
3. These Guidelines respond to the commitment in the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2015-2019) to foster a comprehensive agenda to promote Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR). These guidelines represent an important step in delivering on this agenda by ensuring the progressive realisation of the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation for all.
4. The Council recalls the Council Conclusions on Water Diplomacy adopted on the 19th of November 2018, which recognise that the human right to safe drinking water entitles everyone, without discrimination, to have access to sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic use and the human right to sanitation that entitles everyone, without discrimination, to have physical and affordable access to sanitation in all spheres in life, that is safe hygienic, secure, socially and culturally acceptable and that provides privacy and ensures dignity. As part of this commitment, the EU and its Member States support and protect human rights defenders, including environmental human rights defenders, fighting for these rights to be realised.

5. These Guidelines reaffirm the EU's commitment to gender equality in all EU action, work and policies, including through the coherent implementation of the EU Gender Action Plan, to ensure that the rights and needs of women and girls are met. These Guidelines also support the EU's Rights Based Approach (RBA), in particular in addressing the needs of those in the most vulnerable situations.

 6. The Council hereby approves the Guidelines on Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation. The Guidelines give guidance on how to use the wide range of EU foreign policy instruments and tools to promote and protect the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation. Effective operationalisation of the Guidelines will be undertaken jointly by the EU and its Member States. The Guidelines will be disseminated widely and in an accessible manner. The Council Working Party on Human Rights (COHOM) will support the implementation while involving, when appropriate, other Council working groups.
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