



Council of the  
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COHAFA 80  
ALIM 4  
DEVGEN 140  
CONUN 177  
COHOM 164  
COJUR 36  
GENDER 164  
EDUC 309  
COLAC 93  
COAFR 247  
MAMA 112  
MOG 102  
FIN 765  
RELEX 868

#### NOTE

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From: General Secretariat of the Council  
To: Delegations

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Subject: Spain-Belgium-Hungary Trio Presidency Work Priorities for the Working  
Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA)  
1 July 2023 – 31 December 2024

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Delegations will find in annex work priorities of the Trio Presidency Spain-Belgium-Hungary for the Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA) for the period July 2023 – December 2024.

**SPAIN-BELGIUM-HUNGARY TRIO PRESIDENCY WORK PRIORITIES FOR THE  
WORKING PARTY ON HUMANITARIAN AID AND FOOD AID (COHAFA)**

**1 JULY 2023 – 31 DECEMBER 2024**

1. Throughout their presidency trio, Spain, Belgium and Hungary would like to contribute together to the advancement of the humanitarian agenda and dialogue within COHAFA.
2. We will hereby outline the joint priorities and topics that will shape the discussions and the work of our three presidencies, with a view to pursuing the continuity of previous presidencies in line with the ‘Team Europe’ approach.
3. We will take stock of the achievements made by the Commission on its Communication on ‘the EU’s humanitarian action: new challenges, same principles’ and will strive to ensure follow-up on the Council conclusions on the Communication through a progress report, while also keeping in mind the future of humanitarian action and possible next steps.
4. The EU and its Member States are important humanitarian donors and actors, so quality funding and humanitarian diplomacy will therefore be overarching goals of the trio during their presidencies to ensure an effective and immediate response to humanitarian crises. Moreover, given that global warming will continue to drive more severe and frequent weather-related events and growing humanitarian needs, the trio will also foster enhanced cooperation between humanitarian, development, peace and climate actors to better prevent, prepare for and respond to the climate-related needs of the most vulnerable populations.
5. Beyond our overarching goals, the trio hereby presents five priorities for the period of July 2023 until December 2024 for the COHAFA working party. Depending on evolving humanitarian developments and opportunities that may arise, other subjects may be put forward and common messages will be updated when appropriate.

## **I. PROTECTION**

6. Taking stock of the 2016 staff working document outlining the definition and objectives of humanitarian protection from the European Commission's perspective and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Principals' statement on the centrality of protection in humanitarian action, we intend to exchange further on the centrality of protection and how it can be better addressed and more systematically funded by the Commission and the Member States, while also placing a special focus on the gender perspective (including GBV), education in emergencies and exploring the possible development of a European humanitarian diplomacy strategy, with a view to enhancing the protection of civilians.

## **II. PROMOTION OF AND RESPECT FOR INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW (IHL)**

7. Keeping in mind the November 2019 Council conclusions on humanitarian assistance and international humanitarian law, as well as the objectives on respect for IHL in the aforementioned Commission Communication on humanitarian action, the trio will continue the work of COHAFA on the promotion of and respect for international humanitarian law. In contexts where the humanitarian space is increasingly under threat, we will particularly address the issues of humanitarian access, healthcare and the protection of the medical mission. Moreover, we will keep an eye on the preparations for the 34<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent that will take place in Geneva in October 2024.

### **III. PROTRACTED AND FORGOTTEN CRISES**

8. The trio aims to strengthen awareness of and advocacy in relation to severe and protracted humanitarian crisis situations receiving less attention from the media, donors' governments, or the general public. In this regard, we will particularly consider forgotten crises which lack funding and attention, with a particular geographical focus on Latin America, the Great Lakes, the Sahel, the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa and through the thematic lens of increasingly challenging food insecurity, with a view to finding concrete and durable solutions.

### **IV. HUMANITARIAN FUNDING GAP AND PRIORITISATION OF HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PLANS**

9. The trio would like to further discuss the humanitarian funding gap and prioritisation of Humanitarian Response Plans in order to carry forward the work of the previous trio, especially by facilitating the implementation of the recent Council conclusions on addressing the humanitarian funding gap and the EU common approach on strategic outreach to emerging and potential humanitarian donors. The Council conclusions and the common approach provide for a number of concrete actions to be taken by EU Member States and the European Commission on broadening the donor base, deepening it by increasing contributions from traditional donors, and exploring innovative financial models.
10. We intend to foster elements of the aforementioned Council conclusions and to encourage reaching other possible donors during our presidencies, as well as during the third edition of the European Humanitarian Forum. The trio intends to facilitate regular exchanges in COHAFAs on funding and policy priorities of Member States. The trio plans on continuing the work and discussions around improving the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian action to get the most out of EU and EU Member States humanitarian funding. With that in mind, we will make sure that working areas such as the triple nexus and anticipatory action are part of our discussions.

## V. LOCALISATION

11. The trio welcomes the DG ECHO guidance note on Promoting Equitable Partnerships with Local Responders in Humanitarian Settings and wishes to follow up on its implementation and improvement based on the lessons learned by the Commission. We also wish to shed light on the importance of the empowerment of local women-led organisations in the humanitarian response. In line with international guidance and commitments on localisation and accountability to affected populations, we intend to look at challenges for the EU and possible pathways to advance on localisation, and to put the people we intend to serve at the centre of the humanitarian response. The trio may also possibly look at avenues for better European coordination on these issues.
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