



**Brussels, 23 April 2021
(OR. en)**

7894/21

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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council
On: 23 April 2021
To: Delegations

No. prev. doc.: **7752/21**

Subject: Team Europe
- Council conclusions (23 April 2021)

Delegations will find in the annex the Council conclusions on Team Europe, approved by written procedure on 23 April 2021.

Council conclusions on Team Europe

Context

1. The Council reaffirms its Conclusions from 8 June 2020 and highlights that the Team Europe approach contributes to demonstrating EU global leadership, responsibility and solidarity. Team Europe aims to jointly support partners in overcoming urgent needs and mitigating the health, social, economic, humanitarian, security and political impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, while upholding human rights, gender equality, democracy, good governance and the rule of law. Team Europe also aims to counter the aggravation of inequalities, food insecurity and malnutrition as well as gender-based and domestic violence. The Council recognises that COVID-19 has adversely affected women and girls around the world, and reiterates that gender equality and gender mainstreaming are specific priorities of the EU across all areas of action and that specific measures are needed in this regard at all levels. The Council acknowledges the important contributions made by all members of Team Europe as part of the global EU response to COVID-19. The Council notes that the contributions, as reflected in the joint financial monitoring system for COVID-19, amount to EUR 40.5 billion as of January 2021.
2. The Council recalls that Team Europe consists of the EU, its Member States, their diplomatic network, finance institutions including national development banks, and implementing agencies, as well as the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). All members of Team Europe work together in an inclusive and coordinated manner to support partners. Team Europe is more than the sum of its parts.
3. The Council emphasises that proactive information sharing, close consultation, coordination and flexibility by all team members is essential for joint actions to have sustainable impact. This also forms an essential part of the Union's external action.

Commitments & Actions

4. The Council underlines that Team Europe contributes to the promotion of EU values and interests worldwide, its objectives are fully in line with the New European Consensus on Development and the EU Global Strategy. The Council emphasises that Team Europe interventions aim at global sustainable recovery in the spirit of “building back better and greener”, the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the goals of the Paris Agreement. Team Europe puts focus on leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first, whilst ensuring the meaningful inclusion and participation of youth. Team Europe acts in line with partner countries’ development needs and priorities, and facilitates the transition to inclusive and sustainable economies and societies, to promote digitalisation for development and sustainable connectivity, to boost resilience and to reduce the risk of future crises.
5. The Council emphasises that Team Europe is fully committed to the promotion of an environmentally-friendly recovery and investments in ambitious climate action in line with the objectives of the European Green Deal. The Council highlights the importance of supporting partner countries in their efforts to better align their policies to the objectives of the Paris Agreement. The Council emphasises that Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are important reference points for sustainable green and blue investments. To account for the complex nature of human-environment interrelations, the Council highlights the need to conserve the planet’s biodiversity and forests, to promote sustainable land and ocean use, and encourages the use of comprehensive approaches such as “One Health”.
6. The Team Europe approach reflects the EU’s and its Member States’ strong commitment to multilateralism and emphasises the importance of cooperation with and coordination within multilateral institutions in response to the COVID-19 crisis, in particular within the United Nations (UN) system and with regards to International Finance Institutions (IFIs).
7. The EU and its Member States play an important role in coordinated international debt relief and debt treatment efforts and are committed to furthering international debt relief efforts in a coordinated manner within relevant multilateral frameworks such as the IMF/World Bank and the G20/Paris Club initiatives.

8. Team Europe is committed to improving global health in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. It is essential to ensure timely, fair and equitable global access to safe, affordable and effective vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics against COVID-19 – as a global public good. The EU and its Member States stand at the core of relevant multilateral efforts, in particular regarding the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator and its COVAX Facility. Strengthening health systems and water and sanitation systems, enabling epidemic preparedness and response, and promoting comprehensive and inclusive approaches to public health are key priorities.
9. The Council recalls the EU's commitment, under the European Consensus on Development, to remain committed to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and to the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the outcomes of their review conferences and remains committed to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), in this context.
10. The Council calls upon all members of Team Europe to increase the visibility of their joint engagement as Team Europe in a strategic manner, including through strengthened joint messaging at all levels and the extensive use of the new visual identity of Team Europe. Disinformation needs to be actively countered. The Council emphasises that tailored and strategic communication is essential, and reiterates its call upon the Commission services and the EEAS to develop a strong communications strategy.
11. The Council calls upon Team Europe to continue responding jointly to the crisis, taking into full consideration the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and the integrated approach. All stakeholders need to abide by the humanitarian principles and adhere to international humanitarian law under all circumstances, in particular with regard to ensuring the timely, safe and unhindered access to those in need. The Council also calls upon Team Europe members to continue learning from their experiences, with a view to further increasing the effectiveness of the EU's joint engagement beyond the crisis.

12. The Council emphasises that safeguarding coherence regarding the programming of EU funds under the envisaged Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) is essential, in particular with regard to the relationship between Team Europe Initiatives (TEIs) and Joint Programming/Working Better Together. The Council calls upon Team Europe members to closely coordinate and jointly design, implement and monitor Team Europe Initiatives in an inclusive manner.
13. The Council highlights the following principles when it comes to TEIs:
- a. TEIs need to aim at the greatest transformative impact and systemic change in line with the policy first principle and the strategic objectives and values of the EU. TEIs need to contribute to the objectives and targets under the envisaged NDICI. TEIs need to be planned in a strategic and coherent manner, linked to political and policy dialogues and support reforms.
 - b. TEIs need to be aligned with the development needs and priorities of partner countries. They need to be designed and implemented through participation with relevant partners, including those implementing actions on the ground.
 - c. TEIs need to abide by the principles of transparency and accountability, sustainability, effectiveness and results, “do no harm”, country ownership and inclusive partnership.
 - d. TEIs need to leverage the development potential of the private sector and civil society, and support and empower their independent and active role in democratic transformation.
 - e. TEIs need to build towards increasing the use of Joint Programming as the preferred approach, where feasible. They can also draw on bilateral engagements of Member States and other Team Europe members. Established Joint Programming procedures should be reviewed to increase speed, usability and flexibility.
 - f. TEIs need to be set-up at country and regional/multi-country level. Thematic TEIs should be explored at global level.
 - g. TEIs need to be regularly monitored and evaluated, and if need be adjusted.
14. The Council will continue to provide strategic guidance regarding the joint engagement of Team Europe on a regular basis.