



German Presidency of the Council of the EU

Work Programme

Working Party on Humanitarian and Food Aid / COHAFA

1 July– 31 December 2020

This programme sets out how Germany will use its Presidency of the COHAFA working party to increase the collective impact of the EU and its Member States in the field of humanitarian assistance. To this end, strengthening the working party as a relevant instrument for Member States will be a cross-cutting priority. This includes ensuring continuity through a joint COHAFA trio programme (with trio partners Portugal and Slovenia) as well as a high-level COHAFA session.

The COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on humanitarian needs and assistance will be of particular concern to the working party in the coming months and will be given the appropriate attention on the Presidency's agenda. Accordingly, Germany will employ a flexible approach to the format and agenda of working party meetings. We support the *Team Europe* approach – the collective and coordinated COVID-19 response by the EU and its Member States – and will seek to support its operationalisation. We will facilitate the speedy adoption of the necessary changes in the Humanitarian Aid Regulation to link it with the proposed European Union Recovery Instrument.

Thematically, Germany will focus on two priority topics throughout its Presidency:

- A. Anticipatory humanitarian action and humanitarian adaptation to climate change**
- B. Humanitarian principles and safeguarding of humanitarian space**

In addition, in dedicated COHAFA meetings, attention will be given to the following topics:

- 1. Innovation in humanitarian assistance**
- 2. Humanitarian civil-military coordination**
- 3. Responsible use of the opportunities of digitalisation in humanitarian assistance**
- 4. Inclusion (gender, age, disability)**
- 5. Relations with non-traditional donors**

As it has been good practice, the exchange on specific humanitarian emergencies – including forgotten and protracted crises – will be a standing item at each of the COHAFA meetings. Due space will be given to the humanitarian dimensions of forced displacement and migration.

A. Anticipatory Humanitarian Action and Humanitarian Adaptation to Climate Change

For years, Germany and other EU Member States have been outspoken proponents of a paradigm shift towards a forward-looking humanitarian system. The German COHAFA Presidency will put special emphasis on the role of anticipatory humanitarian action – *pre-determined/pre-financed activities that, based on a credible forecast, enable action ahead of crises, in order to save lives and mitigate the impact of crises* – and its relevance for pressing global issues like climate change and disaster risk reduction.

We intend to bring into COHAFA a presentation of the current state of anticipatory approaches, as well as developments and trends in them, and a discussion on the role that Member States and the EU as a whole can play in them. The aim of this is to promote anticipatory humanitarian action (including early action addressing disease outbreaks), improve the clarity, coherence and integrity of the concept, and promote a common EU position.

B. Humanitarian Principles and Safeguarding of Humanitarian Space

In order to promote principled humanitarian action, we intend to build on advances made by the previous Presidency trio in this field, notably the November 2019 Council conclusions, and to follow up with corresponding efforts during Germany's current membership of the UN Security Council. We will strive for endorsement of the Humanitarian Call for Action by all EU Member States and the EU.

While the promotion of respect for and compliance with IHL as the guiding framework for humanitarian work will be continued, special attention will be given to new challenges arising from international efforts to combat COVID-19. In cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, a discussion will be facilitated to allow the EU to take a strong stance on safeguarding humanitarian principles while respecting and contributing to global efforts to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

Unintended impacts of existing (EU) sanctions regimes continue to impede the provision of principled humanitarian assistance, with over-compliance and de-risking being major issues. Together with the COTER and RELEX/Sanctions working parties, we will examine the latest developments in this regard. We aim to facilitate application of the existing safeguards for humanitarian activities by supporting enhanced guidance and promoting improvements in the regulatory framework for EU sanctions where possible.

I. Innovation in humanitarian assistance

The added value of innovations in the humanitarian sphere depends on the extent to which they are put into practice. Donors are therefore increasingly concerned with creating conditions that support the scaling and mainstreaming of innovations. However, the benefits that innovations can produce are highly context-dependent and their success should thus not merely be measured by scalability. Against this background, we seek to support the development of a common understanding, language and approach to these questions among EU Member States to help foster innovation in the humanitarian system.

II. Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (CMCoord)

CMCoord can be of the essence in contexts of natural disasters (e.g. Mozambique), armed conflicts (e.g. Yemen) and pandemics (e.g. COVID-19). In close collaboration with UN-OCHA and the European Commission, Germany aims to advance the CMCoord agenda by fostering dialogue and strengthening coordination between key actors at HQ and field level. The dedicated COHAFSA session is aimed at taking stock, creating a common understanding of ongoing processes, and providing a platform for exchange.

III. Responsible use of the opportunities of digitalisation in humanitarian assistance

As part of our Presidency, we would like to shed light on particular risks and promising opportunities of digitalisation in humanitarian action. Recent developments in geo-data analysis show great prospects for quicker, better coordinated and higher quality emergency responses, especially if donors understand how they can support their partners in the use of such analysis. At the same time, we are confronted with major challenges concerning the responsible use of data. For the latter, we aim to achieve a common understanding of the current legal and policy requirements and the roles of different actors, particularly in promoting the responsible use of personal data. Building on this, the possibility of developing common language will be discussed.

IV. Inclusion (Gender/Age/Disability)

Addressing the various needs and capabilities of people in connection with gender, age and disability is essential for the effective design and delivery of humanitarian assistance. While there are multiple political guidelines, standards and commitments already in place, there still remains a gap regarding their practical implementation. As a donor community, we will seek to gather best practices and exchange views on how to best encourage our partners to implement gender, age and disability-sensitive humanitarian assistance, and how best to support them in doing so.

V. Relations with non-traditional donors

In recent years, the global humanitarian landscape has undergone dramatic changes and funding requirements have sharply increased. Lately, the corresponding funding gap has even been exacerbated by the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is therefore imperative to reach out to non-traditional donors and to explore the potential for better burden- and responsibility-sharing within the UN coordinated international humanitarian system. During our Presidency, we will seek to identify existing Member State initiatives, establish a common strategic understanding, exchange best practices, and facilitate EU-wide coordination.

VI. Other topics

Given that Germany is currently chair of the 'Mine Action Support Group' (MASG), the Presidency will use the opportunity to raise awareness of the challenges facing the mine action sector and seek to combine Member States' efforts to contribute to a landmine-free world. Due attention will also be given to the humanitarian aspects of the 75th anniversary of the United Nations and links between humanitarian assistance and civil protection.

As per the established procedure, COHAFA will be kept informed about the discussions in the governing bodies of humanitarian international organisations and will prepare statements to be made on behalf of the EU and its Member States at the WFP Executive Board Second Regular Session.

COHAFA will also be kept closely informed of the work of the Youth working party on the European Solidarity Corps.

INDICATIVE COHAFA-SCHEDULE OF THE GERMAN PRESIDENCY¹

1 July – 31 December 2020

	Day	Date	AM	PM
Informal VTC sessions	Thursday	2 July	-	x
	Wednesday	15 July	x	-
Tbc - Formal session in Brussels	Tuesday	15 September	x	x
	Wednesday	16 September	x	
Tbc - Informal session in Munich	Monday	12 October	x	x
	Tuesday	13 October	x	
Tbc - Formal session in Brussels	Wednesday	4 November	x	x
	Thursday	5 November	x	
Tbc - Formal session in Brussels	Tuesday	1 December	x	x
	Wednesday	2 December	x	

¹ Dates from September onwards are for physical meetings. If these are not possible, they will each be replaced by 1-2 VTC meetings on a case-by-case basis.

INDICATIVE CALENDAR OF MAJOR EVENTS²

1 July – 31 December 2020

29 June – 2 July	UNICEF Executive Board
29 June – 3 July	WFP Executive Board
1 July	Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) High-Level Meeting
1 – 2 July	UNRWA Advisory Commission Regular Session
7 – 9 July	78th meeting of the UNHCR Standing Committee
19 August	World Humanitarian Day
8 – 11 September	UNICEF Executive Board
9 September	International Day to Protect Education from Attack
9 – 10 September	RCRC: Virtual Climate Summit – Climate:Red
16 – 17 September	79th meeting of the UNHCR Standing Committee
22 – 24 September	EU Research and Innovation Days 2020
21 – 25 September	UNGA 75 high-level/ministerial week
5 – 9 October	71st session of the UNHCR ExCom
12 – 18 October	World Bank Annual Meeting
16 October	World Food Day
18 – 21 October	UN World Data Forum, Bern
21 October	UNHCR – HC’s Dialogue on Protection Challenges during Pandemics
4 November	– Protection considerations
18 November	– Resilience and inclusion
2 December	– Climate action
9 December	– Reflection on outcomes / way forward
24 October	UN Day (75th anniversary)
28 – 30 October	EU-AU-Summit
16 – 20 November	WFP Executive Board Session Rome
25 November	International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women
26 – 27 November	IOM - Council Meeting
Early December	Publication of the Global Humanitarian Review
3 December	International Day for Persons with Disabilities
8 – 10 December	Global Platform on Anticipatory Humanitarian Action
Mid-December	UN General Assembly humanitarian debate
17 – 18 December	1st anniversary of the Global Refugee Forum

² All events, conferences and summits in this calendar **to be confirmed!**



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