

Council conclusions on Team Europe Global Response to COVID-19

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

1. The Council remains deeply concerned about the global spread of the COVID-19 pandemic that continues to claim lives worldwide. It recognises the magnitude of the related health emergency and applauds the efforts of health, humanitarian and development workers, doctors and researchers as well as other essential workers. This pandemic is a global crisis with far-reaching social and economic implications, which exacerbate various forms of inequality. It is leading to the deterioration of already existing humanitarian crises, including food security crises, and it threatens poverty eradication efforts, sustainable development, human rights, democracy and the rule of law as well as stability and security across the globe. This is a time for global solidarity, international cooperation, effective collective action and transparency.
2. The Council stresses the urgency of protecting the lives and livelihoods of all people, leaving no-one behind. It also stresses the importance of prioritising efforts in partner countries that are most in need in line with the Joint Communication on the Global EU response to Covid-19, with special attention for Least Developed Countries, mostly in Africa, and countries in situations of fragility or affected by conflict, and by supporting partners in the Neighbourhood, the Western Balkans, Latin America and other regions.
3. The Council calls for a rights-based and people-centred approach that focuses on the most vulnerable and marginalised groups and on people in vulnerable situations, including the urban poor, migrants, refugees, internally displaced persons and their host communities, and persons belonging to religious minorities. The Council stresses the need to pay particular attention to gender, age and disabilities.
4. The Council reiterates the commitment by the EU and its Member States to the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement, which are fundamental for a sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. Recovery efforts are a real opportunity to “build back better and greener” and in this context, the Council stresses the importance of delivering fast and tangible results, and of ensuring that support is aligned to partner countries’ recovery plans, while promoting equitable, sustainable and inclusive recovery processes in line with the Green Deal proposed by the European Commission.
5. The Council recalls the key role of the EU in support of the UN Secretary General’s leadership in regard to the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council supports the UNSG’s call for a global ceasefire in light of the pandemic and reiterates its

support to the coordinating role of the World Health Organization (WHO) in the global public health response. It further stresses the need to support effective multilateralism and the importance of coordinating global action with the UN, regional organisations, notably the African Union, and other international multilateral organisations and financial institutions in the response to this global crisis. The Council welcomes the comprehensive efforts made by the International Monetary Fund and the multilateral development banks to significantly accelerate their support to developing countries in their response to the crisis. It also welcomes the initiative of the G20 and the Paris Club to provide debt service suspension for the poorest countries. The Council encourages efforts towards a coordinated international debt relief effort for partner countries, by both official bilateral and private creditors, with a particular focus on countries experiencing solvency problems, on a case by case basis and in close cooperation with International Financial Institutions.

6. The Council fully supports the “Team Europe” approach proposed in the Joint Communication on the Global EU response to Covid-19, which draws on contributions from the EU and its Member States, implementing agencies, the European Investment Bank (EIB), and other European financial institutions, including the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). In this regard, the Council welcomes the announcement to re-direct almost 36 billion¹ euros through the Team Europe packages to address the shattering effects of the COVID-19 crisis in partner countries and regions. Drawing on contributions from the EU, the Member States and other partners, the Team Europe package is based on the following regional breakdown of funds²:
 - Global
 - Guarantees
 - Western Balkans & Turkey
 - Neighbourhood
 - Sub-Saharan Africa
 - Latin America and Caribbean
 - Asia and the Pacific
 - ACP, regional
 - OCTs
7. The Council welcomes the Team Europe policy priorities namely: (i) the emergency response to the immediate health crisis and related humanitarian needs; (ii) the strengthening of health systems and water and sanitation systems as well as reinforcement of partners’ preparedness and response capacity; and (iii) the immediate support to attenuate the social, economic and political consequences of the crisis. In this regard, the Council stresses that all emergency measures must respect international and humanitarian law as well as humanitarian principles, while ensuring a strong gender equality perspective at all levels. Furthermore, the Council reiterates the importance of promoting and upholding the principles of good governance, human rights, the rule of law, democracy, gender equality and non-discrimination, and of promoting security, an enabling civic space, social protection, decent work conditions, as well as access to inclusive and equitable education, including distance learning and within the framework of life-long learning for all.
8. The Council highlights that emergencies, including the current pandemic, exacerbate pre-existing gender inequalities. In this context, the Council emphasises the need to work against gender-based violence and domestic violence as a consequence of the crisis. Furthermore,

¹ This figure was updated on 8 June 2020.

² Corresponding amounts appear in the annex to these conclusions.

the Council highlights the importance of promoting equitable access to quality health care services and education and 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.

9. The Council calls for consistency between the short term humanitarian and emergency response, and the programming of medium and longer term support to address the structural impacts of the pandemic in partner countries and build resilience. The Council emphasises that the longer-term response should be addressed in the next EU development cooperation programming exercise (2021-2027), in the context of our commitments to joint programming, as appropriate. It further underlines the relevance of Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) and of building synergies between EU internal and external policies and instruments.
10. The Council acknowledges the impacts of exceptional measures on livelihoods, food systems, and supply chains. The Council notes with deep concern the aggravation of food insecurity and malnutrition and the risk of COVID-19 doubling the number of people suffering from acute hunger across the world. In this context, the Council stresses the importance of securing access to food and agricultural supplies.
11. The Council recognises that an enhanced humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach is key to addressing the current global health crisis and reiterates its support to the implementation of the Grand Bargain commitments. The Council stresses the importance of ensuring unhindered humanitarian and medical workers' access to and within countries. In this context, the Council commends the Commission for establishing a humanitarian air bridge.
12. The Council highlights the role of EU Delegations in coordinating and ensuring inclusive participation of all Member States' diplomatic networks, including European development agencies, the EIB and other European financial institutions, as well as other relevant actors at country level, in line with the Working Better Together approach. It also stresses the importance of coordinating Team Europe packages with partner countries' and other international donors' efforts. Country ownership and partnering with civil society organisations and the private sector are essential.
13. The Council underlines the urgent need for more global cooperation in research and innovation, to accelerate the rapid development, manufacturing and deployment of effective prevention diagnostics, vaccine and treatments against COVID-19 in all countries. The Council is committed to ensuring quality, safety and equitable access for all to these global public goods, ensuring that no-one is left behind, and welcomes the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator initiative (ACT-A). The Council encourages the promotion of data exchange between researchers as well as the improved access to emerging scientific evidence, including via Open Access and Open Science. The Council stresses the need to strengthen health security and to prepare for future health crises. It recalls that building and strengthening health systems and ensuring the health and safety protection of health and social care personnel is essential to fight back the pandemic and to prevent the knock-on impact on other diseases and, in this context, recognises the key role of the WHO. The Council reiterates its full support to the Global Fund, to the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI), and to UNICEF and recognises the ongoing efforts of other partners such as the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovation (CEPI) in the global fight against the pandemic. The momentum created by the EU-led pledging initiative started on 4 May 2020 -which raised 9.8 billion euros- needs to be sustained.

14. The Council recognises the need to bridge the digital divide and ensure a high level of cybersecurity. It emphasises the opportunity to pursue digital transformation and innovative solutions in supporting health care systems and strengthening societies' resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath. Furthermore, the Council highlights the importance of enforcing the highest ethical standards in the management of personal data.
15. The Council underlines the importance of a joint, swift, visible, and transparent action of Team Europe, in full coordination with partner countries and the UN. The Council reaffirms its steering role in providing strategic political guidance throughout the implementation of the global EU response to COVID-19. It also encourages the onward development of a strong communications strategy on the Team Europe approach, ensuring transparency and tackling disinformation. To this end, the Council:
 - a) Calls on the Commission to base the allocation of resources to partner countries on a joint needs assessment, in cooperation with partner countries and aligned with their response plans to COVID-19 in order to identify gaps and outline main priorities;
 - b) Calls on the Commission and the EU Member states to continue their efforts to accelerate the achievement of the objectives set by the ACT-A;
 - c) Emphasises the need to ensure a link with medium and long term programming;
 - d) Encourages further efforts to build on lessons learnt and good practices to ensure financial and contractual flexibility in the implementation of the global EU response to COVID-19;
 - e) Welcomes the establishment of a joint monitoring system, in line with OECD-DAC guidance and including a possible COVID-19 marker, to ensure accountability and transparency in the use of resources mobilised and allocated, and calls on the involvement of all actors to swiftly and periodically provide up-to-date information on resources under Team Europe; furthermore, the Council emphasises the importance of ensuring transparency in the monitoring of budget support operations;
 - f) Stresses the importance for all the actors involved in Team Europe to coordinate actions, and share information and communication efforts at country level, within the EU, in partner countries and in global and multilateral fora.
 - g) Supports the use of the term "Team Europe" in national or joint communication campaigns, visibility efforts and public announcements, and looks forward to the concrete steps by the Commission services and the EEAS towards a strong communications strategy for Team Europe.