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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
No. prev. doc.:	16510/14 & 13526/20 + COR1
Subject:	Informal Consolidated Version of the Mandate of the Working Party on Human Rights

Delegations will find attached, for information, an informal consolidated version of the mandate of the Working Party on Human Rights (COHOM), as set out in document 16510/14, adopted by the Permanent Representatives Committee (COREPER) on 10 December 2014, and supplemented by documents 13526/20 + COR 1, as adopted by COREPER on 2 December 2020.

Informal Consolidated Version of the Mandate of the Working Party on Human Rights

The Working Party on Human Rights (COHOM) was established by the Council of the European Union in 1987 (and its mandate extended in 1999 and 2003) to address all human rights aspects of the external relations of the European Union and to support the Council's decision-making process in this area.

COHOM's main task is to promote the development, and to oversee the worldwide implementation, of the EU's policy in the field of human rights and democracy, including EU human rights guidelines and human rights dialogues and consultations with third countries. In particular, COHOM assists in identifying the EU's strategic priorities and co-ordinating the positions of the EU and its Member States with regard to specific thematic or geographic issues in multilateral human rights fora, in particular the UN General Assembly (Third Committee) and the UN Human Rights Council.

COHOM undertakes the preparatory work for discussions on human rights and democracy in the Political and Security Committee, Permanent Representatives Committee and in the Council. COHOM cooperates with the geographic working parties of the Council dealing with the human rights situation in the countries within their respective geographic remit, as well as with relevant thematic working parties of the Council, with the aim of mainstreaming human rights in all aspects of external relations of the EU. COHOM also engages with the Working Party on Fundamental Rights, Citizens Rights and Free Movement of Persons (FREMP) on coherence between external and internal action of the EU in the field of human rights.

As regards the European Union regime concerning restrictive measures against serious human rights violations and abuses, the mandate of COHOM covers the following:

- examination and evaluation of information with a view to listing and de-listing of natural or legal persons, entities or bodies and to the regular review of the listings, as well as assessment of whether the information available meets the designation criteria set out in the Council Decision and Regulation concerning restrictive measures against serious human rights violations and abuses;

- making recommendations for listings and de-listings, as well as on the regular review under the Council Decision and Regulation to be reflected in the necessary proposals for legal acts from the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR) or a Member State which will be examined by the Foreign Relations Counsellors Working Party (RELEX WP) and approved by the Permanent Representatives Committee with a view to their adoption by the Council;

In order to make a recommendation for the listing or de-listing of a natural or legal person, entity or body, as well as on the regular review of the listings, COHOM will seek and fully take into account the views of the relevant geographical and/or thematic working party(ies). COHOM may seek these views before or after the discussion in COHOM. COHOM may also obtain these views by meeting with the participation of delegates of the relevant geographical and/or thematic working party(ies). Discussions will include policy considerations on the use of this sanctions regime with respect to other instruments or sanctions regimes, as relevant. If necessary, COHOM will seek further political guidance from a higher level;

As regards all other aspects of the process of examining and reviewing listings, the working methods in Annex I to the Council's Sanctions Guidelines will apply;

- assessing the impact and functioning of the Council Decision and Regulation and suggest, as appropriate, possible improvements.
