COOPERATION BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND IRAQ

The Cooperation Council

Brussels, 14 March 2023
(OR. en)

UE-IQ 3753/23

MINUTES

Subject:	Second meeting of the EU-Iraq Cooperation Council 18 October 2016 Brussels

S U M M A R Y

1) Opening remarks
2) Adoption of the agenda and draft minutes of the First EU-Iraq Cooperation Council, 20 January 2014
3) EU-Iraq bilateral relations: progress in the implementation of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement EU-Iraq bilateral relations: Progress in the implementation of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
4) EU current and longer term assistance
5) A.O.B.

o

o o

Annex I: Provisional agenda

Annex II: Official list of participants from the EU and Iraq delegations

The meeting was opened by the High Representative (HR) of the Union for Foreign Affairs, Federica MOGHERINI, who headed the EU delegation and chaired the Cooperation Council. The EU delegation included Christos STYLIANIDES, Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management and Stavros LAMBRINIDIS, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights. The Iraq delegation was led by the Minister of Foreign Affairs H.E.M. Ibrahim ALJAFARI.

OPENING REMARKS AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

A presentation of the members of the two delegations was followed by an informal exchange of views on domestic and regional political and security issues between the HR and Minister ALJAFARI. This exchange was not formally part of the Cooperation Council because the provisional application of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) does not extend to its Title I on Political Dialogue and Cooperation in the field of Foreign and Security Policy. Therefore, the informal exchange is not covered by these minutes of the meeting. Following this, the meeting in the formal setting of the EU-Iraq Partnership and Cooperation Council, chaired by Ms MOGHERINI, was opened.

The agenda of the present meeting and the minutes of the previous meeting were adopted without modifications.

EU-IRAQ BILATERAL RELATIONS: PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PARTNERSHIP AND COOPERATION AGREEMENT (PCA)

HR MOGHERINI welcomed the progress in the ratification of the PCA and hoped for quick ratification by the last four Member States. She also welcomed and underlined the importance of involving the Kurdistan region in the implementation of the PCA.

The Cooperation Council reviewed the different sectors of cooperation under the PCA. On **democracy and human rights**, Iraq gave information about the second meeting of the sub-committee on Democracy and Human Rights in 2015, which involved officials from several ministries (Foreign Affairs, Justice, Interior, Migration), members of the Prime Minister's office and representatives of the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights. Iraq welcomed the EU support for the 'Bringing Da'esh to Justice' initiative launched by Iraq, the UK and Belgium. Attention was drawn to recently enacted laws on Human Rights, namely: the amnesty law, a federal law against domestic violence, a law against traffic of human beings and a law on the criminalisation of the Baath party (adopted (ratified?) in July 2016). On capacity building in the justice sector, the EU's

valuable help to Iraq via a proposal to cooperate with the Commission for International Justice and Accountability (CIJA) on the evidence-collection of Da´esh crimes, was highly appreciated.
On the effort to end **torture**, Iraq reiterated its belief in building democracy based on the principle of human dignity and in bringing about peace and stability and a better living environment.
Regarding **capital punishment**, which on the one hand is part of Iraqi law and supported by the population, and on the other puts the Iraq's government in conflict with international organisations, FM ALJAFARI noted that this should be seen in the current historical context of unprecedented crimes and that it is therefore very difficult to abolish. Furthermore, it deterred tribal disputes and inter-tribal murders in a culture which remains heavily influenced by tribal interactions. Applying capital punishment on the 36 men convicted for terrorist attacks which claimed the lives of 1700 soldiers (Speicher massacre), was seen as the only way to provide compensation and consolation to the families of the victims; thus, a moratorium on the application of capital punishment must be postponed. Meanwhile, education of society, and the provision of more security and stability in the country must come first.

In response, the EU Special Representative (SR) for Human Rights expressed the EU's gratitude for Iraq's cooperation and underlined the crucial role of reconciliation and stabilisation for future cohesion and good governance in the country. The next subcommittee meeting was expected to take place in early 2017 to discuss a number of important human rights topics. The EU welcomed the information on the recently adopted amnesty law, emphasising the importance of its implementation, and questioned whether the judiciary, tasked with the implementation of the law, would be able to proceed with the necessary speed. The EU also welcomed the fact that the agreement on the prevention and response to conflict-related sexual violence had been signed by Iraq at the UN in September 2016 and also took note of the human trafficking law that had recently been passed. These were important steps to protect women, which also allowed for the reconciliation and reintegration of all victims and their families in their communities. Reference was made to the 'Mosul campaign' and the need to avoid human rights violations while liberating the city, as well as the importance of monitoring such violations with a view to subsequent reconciliation. The EU was committed to accompanying and supporting Iraq's progress in this process and looked forward to an exchange of information on topics such as torture, the rights of women and children, minorities, including religious groups, and strengthening contacts with human rights defenders at the next subcommittee meeting. The EU took note of the positive work being carried out by the independent High Commission for Human Rights, as well as by the Parliament's Human Rights Committee; It recommended that these bodies seek contact with other independent

human rights committees, such as Morocco's Human Rights Commission, to exchange best practices and experiences. On the **death penalty**, the EU would welcome the launch of a national dialogue which could eventually result in a different understanding on the topic for the vast majority of people in Iraq. The EU would be ready to support such a debate. In the meantime other steps could be addressed by the government more swiftly, such as limiting the number of crimes punishable by death penalty in the criminal code, or abstaining from voting on this issue when the topic is raised in international organisms to send a signal to the Iraqi people. The EU also took note that in the Kurdistan region the moratorium on the death penalty that had lasted three years effectively ended in 2015. Finally, the EU offered its support to implement the recommendations relating to the 2014 elections in the upcoming 2017 regional elections and 2018 national elections in Iraq.

On **migration,** which remains a priority for Europe and a topic of mutual concern, the EU affirmed its interest in engaging in, as a first step, an informal dialogue on migration-related issues within the subcommittee for Democracy and Human Rights. Increased cooperation between the Federal Government in Bagdad and the Kurdistan Regional Government was also encouraged as the Kurdistan region has been heavily affected by displacements. Regarding the control of legal and illegal migration, Iraq gave information about the meeting held with the EU delegation and Member States' representatives on the topic, that had reached consensus on the need to support small businesses in Iraq as a means to contribute to stability and to stop people from benefiting from illegal migration.

The representative of the Kurdistan regional government expressed his appreciation for the invitation to participate in the Cooperation Council and outlined the region's efforts to build democracy, which required also a democratic elite and democratic culture that would lead to the establishment of rule of law, representative institutions, as well as principles of coexistence and acceptance. He underlined the principle of tolerance that exists in Kurdistan, which they hoped to strengthen and consolidate, and referred to steps that had been taken towards the empowerment of women enabling them to play a leading role in society, and the efforts on children's rights. He acknowledged that the parliamentary culture needed to be consolidated in such a way that ruling parties and opposition knew their roles and responsibilities and had a positive impact in society. Concerns related to the welfare of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), mainly children and women, and measures taken with regard domestic violence and against honour killings in the Kurdistan region were also raised. As for trade and the economic sector, the Kurdistan regional

government had initiated actions towards economic reform, working with the World Bank to meet international standards in some areas such as procurement. It had started the biometric registration of public employees, as well as the reorganisation of subsidies and had taken steps towards privatisation. He asked for EU assistance in supporting the institutions in the region to ensure that public funds were properly spent and hoped to benefit from the programmes which were outlined in the EU-Iraq PCA.

On **trade**, Iraq referred to the work that had been done in the subcommittee responsible of the implementation of the trade and economic provisions of the PCA, and to the conclusions thereof, as well as to the contact established between the head of the Iraqi delegation and representatives from the EU delegation in Bagdad and to Iraq's reply to all requests from the EU on issues such as customs, financial policies and investment. As to the Court of Arbitration, all preparatory work had been completed and only the ratification and the list of arbitrators were still outstanding. Iraq had committed to take steps to facilitate the establishment of ties between business communities and was working to organise an EU-Iraq investment conference. Technical assistance provided by the EU to Iraq would also be crucial for efforts to join the WTO, which Iraq's negotiating team was ready to initiate. Iraq welcomed European investors and promised to do its utmost to provide a conducive environment for investment and trade in all parts of Iraq.

The EU expressed appreciation for Iraq's commitment to engage on trade and economic matters and intended to share its experience with Iraq in order to improve the framework governing trade and investment in the country, and encourage an increase in mutually beneficial trade flows. The EU also supported Iraq in its membership bid for the WTO and would respond to any requests for technical assistance on that matter. Starting a macro-economic dialogue would help to develop a sound macro-economic framework, for long term stability and investment in the country. The EU welcomed the standby agreement between Iraq and the IMF, which was a crucial tool for achieving economic and financial stability. The successful implementation of the IMF programme would send a strong and positive signal to investors and financial institutions willing to contribute to reconstruction efforts in Iraq. The EU acknowledged the interest in an EU–Iraq investment conference that should be put in place once the security conditions would be propitious and could also mark the beginning of a process whereby EU businesses could start planning for the long term.

Concerning the **energy** sector in Iraq, a strategy for the development in this area, according to Iraq, required continuous cooperation and communication between both parties. Iraq highlighted the

abundance of natural gas in Iraq, and the need for cooperation and assistance from EU countries and companies with experience in this field to help develop the associated gas industry as well as other projects such as a pipeline construction allowing gas to be transported from the south to the north of the country. As far as non-associated natural gas is concerned, some EU countries had been cooperating with Iraq in this area but this resource was limited, as it represented only 20 to 25 % of total gas reserves in the country. The production of electricity to meet national requirements remained underdeveloped. 40 electricity generating plants were needed to reach 25 megawatts of production by 2020 in order to cover the demand for electricity in Iraq. The economy depends up to 90 % on the oil and gas industry and a huge challenge was to attain the necessary transfer of technology to make this industry work. The EU Iraq Centre for Energy, established after the 2011 EU-Iraq Memorandum of Understanding on the Strategic Partnership in Energy, would also contribute to the presence of European countries in Iraq by enabling cooperation with EU companies. Iraq was keen to explore cooperation with the EU through an EU-Iraq energy working group under the Memorandum of Understanding.

The EU acknowledged the immense potential mutual benefits regarding the energy sector, as the EU looked for diversification of its energy sources and since Iraq is interested in developing projects which could be supported by the EU. The EU agreed to explore options through an EU-Iraq energy working group.

The EU continued to support **stabilisation** efforts, including on demining and police training notwithstanding that the challenges in this area were expected to increase in the upcoming period. The EU and Member States had already contributed to approximately 50% of the budget of the UNDP's Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilisation (FFIS) and were also supporting resilience measures for IDPs and reconciliation efforts in Iraq, as well as in the Kurdistan region. The prosecution of war crimes remained essential, in line with the initiative proposed by Iraq, the UK and Belgium with respect to Da'esh war crimes. Cooperation to support the Iraqi economy would continue to be vital. Experts should take the work forward and make sure the cooperation is translated into projects aimed at real needs on the ground.

EU CURRENT AND LONGER TERM ASSISTANCE

On **humanitarian assistance** and support, the EU described the humanitarian crisis in Iraq as one of the largest, most complex and highly volatile in the world, with more than 10 million Iraqis requiring some form of humanitarian assistance, including the 3.3 million civilians who were

internally displaced. These shocking numbers could be higher even in the aftermath of the 'Mosul campaign'. The EU had been working intensively with partners in the humanitarian field and the Iraqi leadership to address this unprecedented crisis. The EU had allocated funds of around 134 million euros for Iraqi people fleeing violence in 2016 thus far, of which over 50 million had been allocated specifically to address to the situation in and around Mosul. Ongoing efforts were constantly being adjusted to the evolving situation on the ground and the engagement with civilian and military authorities had been intense to ensure timely and impartial life-saving assistance.

The EU expressed its solidarity with all Iraqi people and continued to be at the forefront of international humanitarian cooperation enabling safe voluntary and dignified humanitarian assistance actions, ensuring safety through demining and rule of law, provision of basic services, health, electricity, education and livelihood in retaken areas, so that people would reconcile and return to their homes. The success of the international community would not be measured only by defeating Da'esh militarily, but also by how well the needs of all Iraqis are addressed afterwards.

AOB AND CONCLUSIONS

The Cooperation Council considered the meeting to have been a useful opportunity to discuss the ongoing cooperation, providing a good basis for progress on matters of substance. Both sides looked forward to continuing their dialogue in the near future.

***

ANNEX 1

COOPERATION BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND IRAQ

The Cooperation Council

Brussels, 18 October 2016
(OR. en)

UE-IQ 3752/16

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Subject:	Second EU-Iraq Cooperation Council
Date:	18 October 2016
Venue:	Brussels

1. Opening remarks
2. Adoption of the agenda and draft minutes of the First EU-Iraq Cooperation Council, 20 January 2014
3. EU-Iraq bilateral relations: progress in the implementation of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
4. EU current and longer term assistance
5. AOB

***

Exchange of views on domestic and regional political and security issues[1]

[1] The Parties agreed to discuss this point which is not formally part of the Cooperation Council and will not be covered by the minutes of the meeting since the Agreement's provisional application does not extend to political questions.

ANNEX II

OFFICIAL LIST OF EU PARTICIPANTS

EUROPEAN UNION

Federica MOGHERINI	High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Christos STYLIANIDES	Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid & Crisis Management
Stavros LAMBRINIDIS	EU Special Representative for Human Rights

EEAS

Nick WESTCOTT	Managing Director, North Africa, Middle East, Arabian Peninsula, Iran and Iraq, European External Action Service
Patrick SIMONNET	Ambassador, Head of EU Delegation to Iraq
Rosamaria GILI	Head of Division Arabian Peninsula, Iraq and Regional Policies
Sophie KISLING	Chair of the Council Working Party for the Middle East and Gulf (MOG)
Sabrina BELLOSI	Adviser of the High Representative
Nabila MASSRALI	Spokesperson of the High Representative
Guy HARRISON	Desk Officer for Iraq
Katharina ROITHNER	Co-Desk Officer for Iraq
Nicola KUBICEK	Policy Officer for Human Rights
Mychelle RIEU	Human Rights Advisor to Mr. Lambrinidis

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DG ECHO

Sohail LUKA	Member of Cabinet – Communication Advisor
Alessia CORSINI	Desk Officer for Iraq
Javier RIO-NAVARRO	Head of Operations Iraq, based in Erbil
Luigi PANDOLFI	Technical Assistant, Erbil

DG HOME

Dario VASCHETTO	Policy Officer

DG ENER

Leonidas KIOUSSIS	Policy Officer

DG DEVCO

Jobst von KIRCHMANN	Head of Unit Development Coordination Central Asia, Middle East, Gulf, Pacific
Augusto PICCAGLI	Head of Cooperation Iraq and Yemen
Gérard VAN DRIESSCHE	International Aid / Cooperation Officer
Silvia CRESCEMBINI	International Aid / Cooperation Officer
Elisabetta BASILE	Desk Officer for Iraq

DG TAXUD

Jose Luis FERNANDEZ RANZ	International Relations Officer - Iraq Desk

DG ECFIN

Sarah JURREIT	Economic Analyst

DG TRADE

Gosia KOWALCZYK	Policy co-ordinator

COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Luís AMORIM	Head of Unit, Council Secretariat (Foreign Affairs, Enlargement, Civil Protection), Council of the EU
Wolfgang BÄRWINKEL	Desk Officer Middle East/Gulf, (Foreign Affairs, Enlargement, Civil Protection), Council of the EU
Kaenas O'CONNOR	Middle East/Gulf Desk, (Foreign Affairs, Enlargement, Civil Protection), Council of the EU
Lília LOURO	Association and Cooperation Council meetings Coordination, Council Secretariat (Foreign Affairs, Enlargement, Civil Protection), Council of the EU

OFFICIAL LIST OF IRAQ PARTICIPANTS

H.E Mr. Ibrahim ALJAFARI	Minister of Foreign Affairs
H.E Mr .Jawad AL-CHLAIHWI	Ambassador
H.E Mr. Ahmad BERWARI	Ambassador
Falah Mustafa BAKIR	Minister, Head of KRG Department of Foreign Relations
Qays AL-AMERI	Minister's Adviser
Adel AL-MASOODI	Director General Ministry of Trade
Sadiq AL-YASSIRI	Director General Ministry of Oil
Mrdelavar Khaled AJGEIY	Head of KRG Mission to the European Union
Muthana ALUMAYRI	First Secretary
Yesar AL-HAKIM	First Secretary
Basim ALI	Ministry of Transportation
Ahmed AL-SHEIKH	M.O.F.A
Ali ADHAB	Attaché M.O.F.A
Zana Abdallah KURDA	Director EU Affairs, KRG Mission to the European Union
Drgam ALESHEKIR	M.O.F.A
Tharwat SALMAN	Ministry of Trade
Bassam AL-ALI	M.O.F.A
Hassan AL-RUBAYE	Protocol