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Answer given by Vice-President Mogherini

on behalf of the European Commission

(29.11.2019)

The High Representative/Vice-President shares the Honourable Member's concerns regarding the situation of minorities in the Middle East. The EU condemns all forms of intolerance and violence based on religion and belief.

Regarding Iraq, the EU and its Member States remain fully committed to preserving the multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-confessional character of Iraqi society as reaffirmed in the Council Conclusions on Iraq of 15 July 2019[[1]](#footnote-1).

The EU has been at the forefront of humanitarian and development assistance in Iraq and has provided a total of EUR 1.2 billion since 2014 to those most in need, including Christian and Yazidi affected communities, exclusively on the basis of vulnerabilities and regardless of their religious, sectarian or political affiliation (in lines with the 2016 Communication “Lives in Dignity” on Forced Displacement and Development). Such interventions include the provision of basic services and access to livelihood opportunities to internally displaced persons, returnees and their communities. EU assistance is also focusing on the rebuilding of the social fabric in liberated areas, in particular Mosul. Furthermore, EU support is being mobilised to ensure access to durable solutions for Internally Displaced People, promote the security of vulnerable groups and foster reconciliation between communities and accountability for all communities within the Iraqi political system. The EU is contributing with EUR 20 million to UNESCO[[2]](#footnote-2)’s initiative “Revive the spirit of Mosul”, which foresees the rehabilitation of damaged cultural heritage (including churches and other cultural/religious sites, houses, schools), the rehabilitation of the socio-economic fabric and of cultural life.

The EU also regularly addresses human rights and freedom of religion and belief with the Government of Iraq, notably in the context of human rights dialogues. The visit of the EU Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion and Belief, Jan Figel, to Iraq in 2017 was also an opportunity to discuss these important matters and engage with representatives and leaders of Christians and all other religious communities.

1. https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-11026-2019-INIT/en/pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [↑](#footnote-ref-2)