



Press statement- 29.04.2011

## **EP delegation to Iraq concludes its 3rd Interparliamentary meeting in Baghdad**

The European Parliament Delegation for Relations with Iraq, led by Struan Stevenson (ECR-UK) and composed by Mario Mauro (EPP, Italy), John Attard-Montalto (S&D, Malta) and Jelko Kacin (ALDE Slovenia) visited Iraq on 26-29 April 2011, in order to hold the 3rd EU/Iraq Interparliamentary Meeting with their counterparts from the Iraqi Council of Representatives. This was the first interparliamentary meeting organised in the country.

In a Joint Declaration adopted in Baghdad on Tuesday 26, MEPs and members of the Iraqi Council of Representatives called for a swift ratification of the EU-Iraq agreement initialled in 2010 and engaged in mutual cooperation in the respect of human and minorities' rights, including improvement of their security and living conditions.

MEPs also held a series of high-level meetings in Baghdad with the President of Iraq, Jalal Talabani; the speaker of the Council of Representatives, Osama Nujaifi; the Deputy Prime Minister, Saleh Al-Mutlak and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ziad Zibari.

The Delegation also travelled to Erbil, where they met the President of the Kurdistan Region, Masoud Barzani; the speaker of the Kurdistan Parliament, Kemal Kerkuki; the Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Region, Barham Salih and the leader of Al-Iraqiyya party Ayad Allawi.

Among the key items discussed in those meetings were the situation of the region after the Arab spring, the respect of human rights, women's rights and the situation of ethnic and religious minorities in Iraq, the security situation and economic growth opportunities and the parliamentary democracy in the country.

Please find attached the full text of the Joint Declaration signed by MEPs and members of the Iraqi Council of Representatives.

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