



Delegation for relations with Iraq

D-IQ_PV(2013)0124_1

MINUTES

of the meeting of 24 January 2013, from 10.15 to 11.15
Brussels

The meeting opened at 10.25 on Thursday, 24 January 2013, with Struan Stevenson (Chair) in the chair.

1. Adoption of draft agenda (PE 495.807)

Draft agenda was adopted.

2. Approval of minutes of the meetings of 18 October 2012 (PE 490.253)

Minutes were approved.

3. Chair's announcements

Mr Stevenson informed everybody that the meeting is going to be dedicated to the preparation of the Delegation outgoing mission to Iraq, which would have taken place from February 11 to February 15. The purpose of the meeting would have been to collect useful information and advice, from the stability and security point of view, about the current political situation, and practical advice about how to behave for promoting smooth relations with our Iraqi partners.

Mr Stevenson' first recommendation was to follow the medical recommendations scrupulously.

Then he informed the Delegation that the visit would have been divided in two parts: the travel would have occurred on Sunday, 10 February from Vienna to Baghdad, with the stay in Baghdad until Wednesday, following the agenda prepared by our Iraqi friends. Several wishes for meetings have been expressed, from the ones with Delegation counterparts in the Iraqi

Council of Representatives, through the ones with the highest exponents of the Iraqi Government, to the ones with the civil society. The Delegation was waiting for the Iraqi embassy to transmit a draft programme from their part, confirming the meetings that are concretely feasible and desirable. The Delegation should not forget that its members are guests in Iraq, so it would have been appropriate to follow the agenda prepared by the host country. This could not prevent D-IQ to make wishes about the programme, in a non intrusive and polite way. The second part of the visit, from Wednesday to Friday, would have been in Erbil, in the autonomous Iraqi province of Kurdistan. D-IQ would most probably have been able to meet all the highest representatives of the Kurdistan Regional Government as indeed it had been the case on the previous occasion. Also there, D-IQ would have liked to meet the civil society, especially representatives of women' organizations.

On Friday 15, each member of the Delegation would have been free to choose the flight with which to return to Europe, previous agreement with the BCD travel agency. On the way to Iraq, on February 10, however, from Vienna on, the Delegation should have taken the same flight to Baghdad, departing at 10:00 and arriving in Baghdad at 16:00 local time.

Once arrived in Baghdad, it would have been necessary, for security reasons, to follow scrupulously and with no objections the security instructions by the EU Delegation in Iraq, headed by Mrs Jana Hybašková, as well as the instructions of the Iraqi Diplomatic Police, who would have guarded us. The Delegation would have been fast-tracked from the airport to the green zone. Most of the troops protecting the Delegation would have been Kurdish Peshmerga soldiers.

Mr Stevenson quickly gave the floor to **Mrs Anna Gomes**, since she had to leave soon: Mrs Gomes excused herself for her impossibility to stay during the second part of the visit. She would have only assisted to the part of the visit in Baghdad. She strongly suggested meeting Mrs Safiya, a colleague member of the Iraqi CoR, since in her house most fruitful exchanges with the Iraqi civil society are taking place.

Mr Stevenson concluded that the situation does not appear to be very safe: Protests on the streets, attacks, suicide bombings, assassinations of the members of the CoR, and so on, are happening every day.

He passed the floor to Mr Spencer.

4. Exchange of views on the situation of the country:

***Key speaker:* Mr William Spencer, Executive Director, Institute for International Law and Human Rights**

Mr Spencer started by offering the availability to help with different aspects of Delegation visit to Iraq and by briefly describing the work of the IILHR as Human Rights, gender justice, minority rights and civil society building promotion.

Then, he structured his presentation in three points:

1. Overview of the current situation on the ground in Iraq:

According to Body Count, a British American monitoring group, the total number of victims of violent acts was 4471 in 2012. There were on average 53 deaths per week, with violence mainly concentrated in Baghdad and Ninawa province. Instead, the main oil extraction areas in the South of the country are mainly violence-free, with 2,8 million barrels per day extracted, which makes of Iraq the second largest oil extracting country in the world.

Fortunately, there had been no further escalation of violence since the departure of the US troops in 2011. From 2009 on, the number of attacks has been stable. In Baghdad, despite a general climate of fear and violence, there are new hotels, new shopping malls, dynamism, and so on. However, in Ninawa the situation is much worse, also because the generated financial revenue leaks towards Erbil, and the province is in the middle of long-lasting territorial claims between the central government and the Kurdistan autonomous region. In addition, Ninawa has a long border with Syria; subsequently the Al-Qaida activity is much more widespread. In this framework, the weakest and most disadvantaged components are the different ethnical / religious minorities, which not only do not see their rights fully recognised, but are often discriminated against. In addition, the widespread presence of Kurdish intelligence in Ninawa further complicates the situation.

2. Political situation:

Iraqi Finance Minister, one of the most prominent Sunni politicians, has been persecuted by forces loyal to the Prime Minister Al Maliki. This brought many Sunnis to protest on the streets of Baghdad. Many questions were raised about Al Maliki intentions: there is a justified fear he wants to seize large chunks of power. The Prime Minister, therefore, threatened to call for early elections, but even many other Shia components, including the Gran Ayatollah Al-Sistani, expressed themselves against early polls. Iraqi President, Mr Talabani, seen by many as a genuinely "super partes" politician, is still sick and is slowly recovering in Germany. In April 2013 there are going to be provincial elections, where the effect of the current crisis will be seen in the most evident way. Next national elections will be held in January 2014.

Despite this difficult political situation, there is some real, measurable progress. The creation of the Independent High Commission for Human Rights; the sustained activity of the Human Rights Committee of the CoR towards the creation of new legislation to protect persons with disabilities; improvements in social welfare; creation of special committees against discrimination; all these improvements may justify a cautious optimism in believing that Iraq is continuing its path towards democracy. Mr Spencer explicitly encouraged the Delegation to acknowledge this fact.

3. "What is actually possible for the Delegation to do...?"

Mr Spencer encouraged the Delegation to go out of the green zone to meet the people of Iraq: civil society, religious leaders, business community, etc...

Mr Stevenson thanked Mr Spencer. He added that we are getting conflicting advice. On one side, the EU Head of Delegation in Baghdad advised a very cautious approach (corroborated

by press headlines); on the other side the approach of Mr Spencer seems to be quiet optimistic. Mr Stevenson added, afterwards, that the in-camera session with the EEAS INTCEN (to follow) will clarify these important aspects.

Mr Stevenson also asked Mr Spencer why the oil generated revenues in Iraq are still not distributed among the population. There is still lack of basic services, in front of an expensive arms deal with Russia. There is limited access to electricity, sewage systems are still not operating properly, and Baghdad is the second dirtiest city in the world.

Mr Spencer answered that these things do remain problematic, despite an improvement, and there has been a lot of criticism about corruption in the country. Nevertheless, the situation is much more complex, so he suggested observing it on the ground.

Mr Gabriele Visentin called for an in-camera setting for the security briefing. The in-camera part was not recorded and will be excluded from the present minutes.

5. Any other business

None.

6. Date and place of next meeting

Brussels, 26 March 2013

The meeting closed at 11:20.

**ПРИСЪСТВЕН ЛИСТ/LISTA DE ASISTENCIA/PREZENČNÍ LISTINA/DELTAGERLISTE/
ANWESENHEITSLISTE/ΚΟΗΛΟΛΙΓΑΤΕ ΝΙΜΕΚΙΡΙ/ΚΑΤΑΣΤΑΣΗ ΠΑΡΟΝΤΩΝ/RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/
LISTE DE PRÉSENCE/ELENCO DI PRESENZA/APMEKLĒJUMU REĢISTRŠ/DALYVIŲ SAŖAŠAS/JELENLÉTI ÍV/
REGĪSTRU TA' ATTENDENZA/PRESENTIELIJST/LISTA OBECNOŠCI/LISTA DE PRESEŃAS/LISTÁ DE PREZENŤÁ/
PREZENČNÁ LISTINA/SEZNAM NAVZOČIH/LÄSNÄOLOLISTA/DELTAGARLISTA**

Бюро/Mesa/Pfedsednictvo/Formandskabet/Vorstand/Juhatus/Προεδρείο/Bureau/Ufficio di presidenza/Prezidijs/Biuras/Elnökség/ Prezydium/Birou/Predsednictvo/Predsedstvo/Puheenjohtajisto/Presidiet (*)
Struan Stevenson (P)
Членове/Diputados/Poslanci/Medlemmer/Mitglieder/Parlamendiliikmed/Μέλη/Members/Députés/Deputati/Deputāti/Nariai/Képviselők/ Membri/Leden/Posłowie/Deputados/Deputați/Jäsenet/Ledamöter
Ana Gomes,
Заместници/Suplentes/Náhradníci/Stedfortrædere/Stellvertreter/Asendusliikmed/Αναπληρωτές/Substitutes/Suppléants/Supplenti/ Aizstājēji/Pavaduojantys nariai/Póttagok/Sostituti/Plaatsvervangers/Zastępcy/Membros suplentes/Supleanti/Náhradníci/Namestniki/ Varajäsenet/Suppleanter
Thomas Ulmer,

187 (2)
193 (3)
49 (6) (Точка от дневния ред/Punto del orden del día/Bod pořadu jednání (OJ)/Punkt på dagsordenen/Tagesordnungspunkt/Päevakorra punkt/Ημερήσια Διάταξη Σημείο/Agenda item/Point OJ/Punto all'ordine del giorno/Darba kārtības punkts/Darbotvarkēs punktas/ Napirendi ponti/Punt fuq l-aġenda/Agendapunt/Punkt porządku dziennego/Ponto OD/Punct de pe ordinea de zi/Bod programu schôdze/ Točka UL/Esityslistan kohta/Föredragningslista punkt)
##

Наблюдатели/Observadores/Pozorovatelé/Observatører/Beobachter/Vaatlejad/Παρατηρητές/Observers/Observateurs/Osservatori/
Novērotāji/Stebėtojai/Megfigyelők/Osservatori/Waarnemers/Observatorzy/Observadores/Observatori/Pozorovatelia/Opazovalci/
Tarkkailijat/Observatörer

По покана на председателя/Por invitación del presidente/Na pozváni předsedy/Efter indbydelse fra formanden/Auf Einladung des
Vorsitzenden/Esimehe kutsel/Με πρόσκληση του Προέδρου/At the invitation of the Chair(wo)man/Sur l'invitation du président/
Su invito del presidente/Pëc priekšsēdētāja uzaicinājuma/Pirmininkui pakvietus/Az elnök meghívására/Fuq stedina tal-President/
Op uitnodiging van de voorzitter/Na zaproszenie Przewodniczącego/A convite do Presidente/La invitația președintelui/Na pozwanie
predsedu/Na povabilo predsednika/Puheenjohtajan kutsusta/På ordförandens inbjudan

Mr William Spencer, Executive Director, Institute for International Law and Human Rights;

Съвет/Consejo/Rada/Rådet/Rat/Nõukogu/Συμβούλιο/Council/Conseil/Consiglio/Padome/Taryba/Tanács/Kunsill/Raad/Conselho/
Consiliu/Svet/Neuvosto/Rådet (*)

Комисия/Comisión/Komise/Kommissionen/Kommission/Euroopa Komisjon/Επιτροπή/Commission/Commissione/Komisija/Bizottság/
Kummissjoni/Commissie/Komisja/Comissão/Comisie/Komisia/Komissio/Kommissionen (*)

Sybille Rieder, EEAS INTCEN; Charles Stuart, EEAS Security Directorate; Gabriele Visentin, EEAS

Европейска служба за външна дейност/Европскá služba pro vnější činnost/EU-Udenrigstjenesten/Europäischer Auswärtiger
Dienst/Euroopa välisteenistus/Ευρωπαϊκή Υπηρεσία Εξωτερικής Δράσης/European External Action service/Servicio Europeo de
Acción Exterior/Service européen pour l'action extérieure/Servizio europeo per l'azione esterna/Eiropas Ārējās darbības
dienests/Europos išorės veiksmų tarnyba/Európai Külügyi Szolgálat/Servizz Ewropew għall-Azzjoni Esterna/Europese dienst voor
extern optreden/Europejska Służba Działañ Zewnętrznych/Serviço Europeu para a Acção Externa/Serviciul european pentru actiune
externă/Európska služba pre vonkajšiu činnosť/Evropska služba za zunanje delovanje/Euroopan ulkosuhdehallinto/Europeiska
avdelningen för yttre åtgärd (*)

Други институции/Otras instituciones/Ostatní orgány a instituce/Andre institutioner/Andere Organe/Muud institutsioonid/
Άλλα θεσμικά όργανα/Other institutions/Autres institutions/Altre istituzioni/Citas iestādes/Kitos institucijos/Más intézmények/
Istituzjonijiet oħra/Andere instellingen/Inne instytucje/Outras Instituições/Alte instituții/Iné inštitúcie/Druge institucije/Muut
toimielimet/Andra institutioner/organ

Други учасници/Otros participantes/Ostatní účastníci/Endvidere deltog/Andere Teilnehmer/Muud osalejad/Επίσης Παρόντες/Other participants/Autres participants/Altri partecipanti/Citi klātesošie/Kiti dalyviai/Más résztvevők/Partecipanti oħra/Andere aanwezigen/Inni uczestnicy/Outros participantes/Altji participantġ/Iní účastníci/Drugi udeleženci/Muut osallistujat/Övriga deltagare

Carlos Kurdi - Zana Kurda, KRG EU Mission , Merry Fitzgerald, EU- Turkmen friendship, Hassan Aydinli, Iraqi Turkmen Front, Maud Vanwalleghem

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PPE

S&D

ALDE

ECR

Verts/ALE

GUE/NGL

EFD

NI

Marisol Guirao Galdon

Airis Meier

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Кабинет на генералния секретар/Gabinete del Secretario General/Kancelář generálního tajemníka/Generalsekretærens Kabinet/Kabinett des Generalsekretärs/Peasekretäri büroo/Γραφείο Γενικού Γραμματέα/Secretary-General's Office/Cabinet du Secrétaire général/Gabinetto del Segretario generale/Ġeneralsekretära kabinets/Generalinio sekretoriaus kabinetas/Főtitkári hivatal/Kabinett tas-Segretarju Ġenerali/Kabinet van de secretaris-generaal/Gabinet Sekretarza Generalnego/Gabinete do Secretário-Geral/Cabinet Secretar General/Kancelária generálneho tajomníka/Urad generalnega sekretarja/Pääsihteerin kabinetti/Generalsekreterarens kansli

Γενерална дирекция/Dirección General/Generální ředitelství/Generaldirektorat/Generaldirektion/Peadirektoaraat/Γενική Διεύθυνση/Directorate-General/Direction générale/Direzione generale/Ģenerāldirektorāts/Generalinis direktoratas/Főigazgatóság/Direktorat Ġenerali/Direktoraten-generaal/Dyrekcja Generalna/Direcção-Geral/Direcții Generale/Generálne riaditeľstvo/Generalni direktorat/Pääosasto/Generaldirektorat	
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Rok Kozelj, Robertino Babic	
Сътрудник/Asistente/Asistent/Assistent/Assistenz/Βοηθός/Assistant/Assistente/Palīgs/Padējējas/Asszisztens/Asystent/Pomočnik/Avustaja/Assistenten	

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