



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Delegation for Relations with Iraq

**5th European Parliament – Iraq
Interparliamentary Meeting
4 December 2014
Brussels**

**Report by Mr David CAMPBELL BANNERMAN MEP,
Chair of the Delegation**

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Introduction

The fourth interparliamentary meeting dates back to September 2012. Therefore, this fifth one has been a genuine occasion for restoring links and cooperation between the two partners, namely the European Parliament and the Iraqi Council of Representatives.

The meeting was preceded by a dinner, hosted by Mr Campbell Bannerman in the Restaurant "Le Crabe Fantôme" in Brussels and followed by a luncheon, offered on behalf of President Martin Schulz, in the Presidential salon of the Paul Henri Spaak building.

The meeting itself took place on the morning of December 4, 2014, from 9:30 to 13:00.

There was a wide variety of topics debated during the day. Fight against the so called "Islamic State" terrorism was the main issue at stake. But also the recently reached agreement between the Iraqi Central Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government, the inclusiveness of the new Iraqi Government, national dialogue and compromise, were all important topics emerged during the debates. Moreover, regional context and EU-Iraq Partnership and Cooperation Agreement were debated. For each topic, experts were invited, from the European Commission, European External Action Service, US Mission in the EU and from NGOs working on the field.

Beyond exchange of information and debate, the visit greatly contributed towards confidence building, enhancing friendship and strengthening not only institutional, but also personal ties.

The IPM was judged as having been very successful. It generated a lot of positive expectations. Now the priority of the Delegation for Relations with Iraq is to fulfil them, together with the Iraqi friends.

1. Mr Campbell Bannerman MEP, D IQ Chair

The Chair started by expressing support to the new and inclusive Iraqi Government. He described Iraq as one of most interweaved ethno-cultural mosaics in the world, heart of ancient empires and cradle of civilisation. He expressed sadness in front of horrendous crimes committed by fanatic terrorists. He condemned the so called "Islamic State" (ISIL) in the strongest terms and stated that the European Parliament stands side by side with the Iraqi Government, the Kurdish Peshmerga forces and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in their struggle against these terrorists. Moreover, he praised the KRG for providing shelter and hospitality to a huge number of internally displaced people and refugees. He mentioned that everybody in Iraq is in danger, from any ethnical component, be it an Arab, a Turkmen, a Yezidi, an Assyrian Christian, and so on. He welcomed the recent agreement between the Government of Iraq (GOI) and the KRG for an equitable distribution of oil-generated resources in exchange for budgetary release.

He continued by saying that in Iraq, despite good perspectives of an inclusive Government, a cultural battle on school desks is needed: only in this way deeply rooted societal divides, struggle for power and endemic corruption can be efficiently addressed and eradicated.

Moreover, he focused on the pillar of the EU-Iraq cooperation, the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), ratified in 2012. In particular, he mentioned its article 113, which foresees the creation of a Parliamentary Cooperation Committee and stated that the European Parliament is ready to nominate its part of the Committee, which logically consists in the Delegation for Relations with Iraq. He invited the Iraqi partners to nominate their Members from the Council of Representatives.

He concluded by saying that the European Parliament attaches great importance to relationship with Iraq, and adopted several Resolutions on the topics recently. He summarised the contents of the most recent one, on kidnapping and mistreatment of women. In this framework, he mentioned the crimes against women perpetrated by ISIL, but also forced marriage and female genital mutilation (this latter aspect is especially alarming in the Kurdistan Autonomous Region, affecting up to 41% of women there).

2. Mr Humam Hamoudi, Chair of the Iraqi Delegation, CoR VP

Mr Hamoudi thanked the Chair for mentioning the rich Iraqi history and for following-up the situation in the country. He conveyed the salutations of Dr Al-Jubouri, the Speaker of the Council of Representatives. Dr Al-Jubouri would have come personally, but he had to travel to Qatar. Indeed, there is a new approach in the Iraqi politics towards the Gulf States. A new language has been used with them, fostering a new sort of cooperation and attracting more support from neighbouring countries to Iraq.

Mr Hamoudi continued by saying that there are new faces, a new Prime Minister, a new Government, and a new Plan of Action. He talked about the need for a balance in the armed forces, and an amnesty (more than 3000 prisoners have already been released): the origin of the idea of this amnesty simply lies in the fact that ISIL targeted everybody. These terrorists do not know the language of dialogue; they only master killings and beheadings. Daesh is a cancer and the main responsible of what is happening now in Iraq.

Islamic fundamentalism does come out of the Arab/Islamic culture, but it is supported and financed by US and Europe, added VP Hamoudi. Therefore, the whole world is responsible for the rise of Daesh. He mentioned that there were three conferences held on ISIL in just a few days: the NATO one saw the participation of more than 70 countries; then, there was one on how to combat Daesh culturally; and the third one consisted in the Interparliamentary meeting, in the European Parliament. Dr Hamoudi defined ISIL as a devil. A devil, which however contributed to a rise of a new element, not political, but psychological, in the Iraqi society: everybody feels the need to cooperate! In Anbar, Karbala, Najaf people stay at home, not offering any support to ISIL. Peshmerga and Southern provinces all combat Daesh together!

He continued by saying that Iraq expects support from the European Parliament in the fight against terrorism, since ISIL fighters also came from Europe.

Then he spoke about the 2 million internally displaced people, disseminated everywhere in the country. Many schools are overcrowded. Saudi Arabia allocated half a billion

dollars, but there is some red tape to convey this help. Iraq is thankful to IOM, to the Red Cross and to other organisations, but it really takes too long for help to be deployed, and the winter is approaching. Where ISIL is in retreat, a lot of infrastructure is demolished. There is a Fund for Reconstruction, and this fund needs financial support, which will be maybe partially covered by the Gulf countries. Mr Hamoudi also exhorted the EU to help in financing the Fund, since Iraqi treasury is almost empty, due to the purchase of a lot of weapons in an unorganised way and to the fall of oil prices on the international markets. Before the ISIL surge, Iraq was able to export more than three million barrels a day, now only two.

Moreover, Dr Hamoudi mentioned the agreement with the KRG. The agreement is based on the acknowledgement that oil is a common resource for all Iraqi citizens, and should be distributed equally. On the other side, Peshmerga were recognised as an integral part of the Iraqi armed forces, and given consistent funds by the central Government.

In addition, he spoke about the need to upgrade foreign investments. He said Iraq is economically prepared to receive them and asked what are the guarantees that European companies wish to obtain in order to come and invest in Iraq. He said Iraq is open to Europe, on the basis of mutual respect and comprehension.

He concluded by saying that in the CoR there is an ad hoc Committee, called "friends of the European Parliament". He was glad to see Ambassador Al-Suhail, which is an expert in the topic. He greeted with enthusiasm the proposal of the Chair to set-up a Parliamentary Cooperation Committee on the basis of article 113 of the Partnership and Cooperation agreement and he also mentioned the need for cultural exchange, in order to help installing a new cultural environment in the region, against all forms of extremism.

3. Ambassador Brett McGurk, USA, Deputy Special Presidential Envoy

Ambassador McGurk started by praising Sheikh Hamoudi for good and constructive cooperation showed in the last decade in order to bring peace to Iraq.

He continued by saying that ISIL really began the offensive on New Year's Day (of 2014), and tried to conquer Ramadi. But the world was not paying enough attention at that time. Later on, the city of Mosul collapsed in 48 hours. Daesh put a lot of videos on You Tube, showing horrific executions. At a certain point, Baghdad could have fallen in any moment.

In those moments, USA changed the approach. Three things were rapidly done in order to address the security challenge:

- Increase of surveillance flights from one per month to 60 per day;
- Deployment of "the best" military advisers for an Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) assessment, particularly around Baghdad;

- Setting of "joint operation rooms" with the ISF in order to strike more efficiently from the air subsequently;

In this climate, the 30 April national elections went incredibly well, continued Mr McGurk. The Iraqi Supreme Court and the Council of Representatives showed dynamicity, and also the Cabinet was chosen pretty quickly. He commended the Iraqi colleagues for the active political life even in the most difficult moments.

US-led air strikes began on August 8, with precision and efficacy. Up to December 4, 2014, 635 strikes took place in Iraq, with a historical level of accuracy, with very few civilian victims. Throughout this period, there has been a continuous and close cooperation with the Government of Iraq (GOI). The new Government's approach is fundamentally different from the past, and there are benefits, for example the recent oil agreement with KRG, and the budgetary process. Security minister and Interior Minister were nominated for the first time in 5 years.

He continued by saying that the world must help, since the price of oil is falling steadily, depressing Iraqi economic growth and prospects. Prime Minister Al-Abadi asked, during the anti-ISIL coalition (60 countries) conference, for a Reconstruction Fund: as areas are liberated from ISIL, they must be re-qualified. USA supports the idea; other countries should support it as well.

On the anti-ISIL campaign side, Mr McGurk stated that front lines are in Iraq and Syria, but it is a global campaign. There are 5 points of effort, on which all the 60 countries of the newly formed coalition agreed:

1. Military support to Gol and Peshmerga;
2. Countering foreign fighters (stricter control in the airports);
3. Cutting ISIS financial sources (mobile oil refineries have been efficiently targeted);
4. Enhancing humanitarian aid (financial support to UN agencies is needed);
5. Delegitimising ISIL messages (this is a broadly conceived task for all the international community).

In addition to the USA, air strikes in Iraq are performed also by Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Netherlands, and UK. There has been some success. Local forces, fighting on the ground, are covered from the air. ISIL is being eroded in many areas. For example, two strategic dams, one town (Baiji) and one oil refinery (the Baiji one) have been liberated. The town of Amerli saw the ISIL siege lifted. More counteroffensives will begin in spring. Currently, US military trainers and advisers are operational on the ground and training the ISF.

The Ambassador concluded by saying that there are 18.000 foreign fighters in ISIL, almost all of them suicide bombers. In Iraq there are 30 suicide bombers per months, sometimes 50. This is devastating for the psychology of a nation and Iraq cannot face the problem alone. He welcomed the role of the CoR in issues conducive to a more efficient struggle against ISIL, such as the amnesty process.

Mr Al-Rikabi said that Iraq has been suffering terrorism from 2003 on. Thousands of bomb attacks have killed many innocent people. The whole world is paying attention now. There is a UNSC Resolution, num. 2178, which addressed the issue in detail. Is there a way to implement this Resolution, a mechanism? Is there seriousness in the 60 states' coalition to face Daesh in all the fields mentioned in the Resolution? Moreover, USA has means to monitor movements of capital and fighters: through this monitoring, did the USA find complicity of any actors, concerning the flow of foreign fighters and the illicit selling of oil?

Mr Kanna said that ISIL was doing a real ethnic cleansing of all components of the Iraqi society, including Assyrians, Turkmens and Yezidi. He added that Mosul fell also because there was disagreement about governing it. Now, the inhabitants of those areas need weapons in order to be able to free their cities. Culture of hatred and violence can be significantly contained by eradicating ISIL.

Ms Gomes greeted the Iraqi friends and asked Mr McGurk to be more specific about the proxy war in Iraq, particularly concerning the underneath Sunni-Shia conflict. She acknowledged Iran's interference, but she stated that the interference by Saudi Arabia, and also by Turkey, has been more devastating than the Iranian one. She asked what message we are passing to KSA and Turkey. She said that KSA should have learned from Al-Qaida that eventually turned against them.

Mr Smith emphasised Ms Gomes's question. He welcomed the formalisation of the 60 countries' coalition. He asked what is the definition of success, when will the coalition hand over to ISF?

Mr Permuy said Sunnis were discriminated against, and this led to the formation of militias. He asked whether the GoI finally represents all the Iraqi diversity.

Mr Marouf (Patriotic Union of Kurdistan representative) asked if there is possibility for ground intervention. He stated that ISIL is attacking Kobane from Kurdish borders, but there is no real Turkish help to people of Kobane.

Ambassador McGurk answered that yes, everyone in the coalition is serious about the implementation of chapter 7 UN Resolutions, especially the 2178 (occasion, in which President Obama chaired the session). There is focus on the issue. He was also optimistic about the regional dialogue between Iraq and its neighbours, due to a new approach of the GOI. There is now a clear dialogue, showed with, for instance, a landmark visit of PM Al-Abadi to KSA. Moreover, he answered to Mr Kanna's question in a positive way, stating that, indeed, empowering local communities is one of the priorities and is starting to happen, thanks to the new GOI.

4. Mr John O'Rourke, Head of Division, EEAS

Mr O'Rourke started by informing the audience that the Foreign Affairs Council recently instructed EEAS to develop a strategy on Syria and Iraq, which should provide an answer on how can the EU (as a whole and at Member States' level) provide a response to the Daesh threat. The current counter terrorism response is trying to establish a sort of "cordon sanitaire" around ISIL, which should cut all possibilities for smuggling and self-financing of this terrorist organisation. He continued by saying that the EU stands ready to assist the GOI in the Counter Terrorism field with information sharing and analysis, and to work with the GOI to develop a good counter-narrative to Daesh. The primary concern of the EU is to emphasise human rights and rule of law, two principles in absence of which the country could be lead to an even bigger radicalisation. EU is trying to help with an appropriate response to the huge humanitarian disaster taking place in the country.

Moreover, he underlined the inherent limitation of a purely security oriented response: root causes need to be addressed in partnership with the GOI. Also a diplomatic engagement with regional actors is an important factor. The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) provides a useful framework for cooperation. Mr O'Rourke then showed readiness to help GOI in the implementation of its work programme 2014-2018. He added that the key word is inclusiveness: There are some 60 laws before the CoR, a number of which dealing with increasing inclusiveness. Issues as the new de-Baathification legislation, Counter Terrorism legislation, amnesty law, are all extremely important.

He added that, in longer term, structural reforms are needed in order to ensure independence of judiciary. Political control over all armed force should be established, as well as the trust of citizens towards the Iraqi Security Forces. He added that there are some militias operating against Daesh, but responsible of severe violations of human rights and underlined the need to tackle the issue. Institution building is also needed. Another issue at stake he mentioned was devolution: how much power should be given to regional authorities? Ultimately, he added, it is about developing a sense of identity, a notion of citizenship. He stressed the need for broad-based reconciliation, by developing a sense of respect.

On the economic front, Mr O'Rourke highlighted the shortcomings of public finances. Revenue sharing agreement with the KRG is a welcome development, but things like fight against corruption and flight of capitals need to be reinforced. Moreover, there must be a link of development work with humanitarian assistance.

Eventually, Mr O'Rourke mentioned the importance of dialogue with regional partners, especially with the ones who "unleashed the genie", which is now out of control. He concluded by saying that there is a certain "malaise", an identity crisis, particularly in the Sunni Islam, which underpins propensity for radicalisation. EU is not well placed to speak on the issue, but still, the issue should be addressed, together with regional actors. The question of ideology is important, he continued, but it should not be an excuse to exclude all forms of political Islam.

5. Mr Jean-Claude Boidin, Head of Unit, DG DEVCO, EC

Mr Boidin said there has been significant support for reconstruction and transition. In 2010 the first Country Strategy Paper (NIP) was adopted, covering a three year period, which was focused on water management, good governance and education (including labour market). Programmes out of this period are now being implemented. Since then, the cooperation has strengthened further: in August 2014 a 4-year cooperation programme (2014 -2017) was adopted by the EU, in order to adapt to the Iraqi National Indicative Program (NDP) duration. The focus is on 3 areas: Rule of law and human rights; primary and secondary education; access to sustainable energy. Iraq is a middle income country rich in resources. The current liquidity crisis is caused mainly by structural political instability and inadequate model of governance, rather than by a lack of resources. Therefore, EU cooperation should foresee a transfer of relevant technical and political expertise.

In the framework of the current programming, 78 million euros are foreseen under the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), but within the PCA, usage of other instruments is also possible: human and emergency aid, instrument for democracy and human rights, enhancing local authorities, and Erasmus for All.

Mr Boidin concluded that broader cooperation with Iraq is feasible, despite the difficult situation, because it is centred on reinforcing governance in the country. Increased credibility of Iraqi institutions will contribute to national reconciliation and broad consensus.

Ms Gomes agrees on a comprehensive programme for Iraq. She stressed the importance of women rights, to be inserted in the Rule of Law chapter. She also said that, in order to implement a long-term strategy, people working on the ground in Iraq are needed! She mentioned that EU Ambassador stays in the British compound, without many possibilities to move. She added that we need leadership and that HR Mogherini should allow people to move around, wherever it is possible to work. She stressed the importance of a cooperation e with the KRG, defined as the main pillar of a united Iraq.

Ms al-Rikabi observed that Iraqi water resources problems depend mostly on external factors, since 85% of water comes from Turkey. But Turkey has built dams, co-financed by the EU, which are very detrimental for Iraq. EU should convince Turkey to cooperate more with Iraq on the water issue. Moreover, he said that state building is a non-linear process, which can easily take from 20-30 years, without taking into consideration terrorism and negative interference by neighbours. He added that Iraq needs support from EU in this regard, but the main support it needs is to stop negative interference of neighbours. He also asked if it really makes sense to build a coalition against terror, in which countries that support terrorism are included, while other countries, which fight against terrorism, are excluded. What credibility does such a coalition have?

Ambassador Suhail chairs, among other functions, the Committee for friendship with the European Parliament in the CoR. She expressed high appreciations for the new Delegation for Relations with Iraq and for all the support offered by the EU. She expressed the importance of EU supporting IDP and refugee issue, very sensitive

especially in the approaching winter season. Yezidi women need to be helped as well. She acknowledged the sufferance of all Iraqi fully-fledged ethnic components, including the Turkmen. She spoke about a need of a joint coordination with the EU for a humanitarian response. She thanked EP for the recently approved Resolutions on the situation in Iraq. She also commended the one adopted by the CoE, and the UNGA Resolutions 2178 and 2170. Moreover, she commended the EU Foreign Ministers' Council for its adopted strategy towards Iraq.

She said that the newly nominated GOI is a proof that all Iraqi people is represented, and considered legitimate by everyone. It promised to tackle a number of issues, including national reconciliation, re-instatement of population in their homes, fighting corruption, etc.

She concluded that there is a real benefit in the extended EU - Iraq cooperation, despite the challenges. She mentioned, in this regard, many fruitful meetings held in Baghdad with the EU Delegation.

Ms Talabani said the Iraqi Constitution guarantees equal representation of all components of the Iraqi society. She spoke about the need to adopt or enact Laws about the Council of the Union, the Federal Court, oil and hydrocarbons, protection of Turkmen, etc. On women rights, attention is focused especially on domestic violence and widows, while very specific focus needs to be given to women living in refugee camps, while men are imprisoned by Daesh. She also mentioned the 5000 Yezidi women in the hands of terrorists, and the urgency to get them home.

Mr Hamoudi said the first thing to do in Iraq now is to build up a properly working government. He added that Iraq needs institutions and high standards. Consolidating society is necessary; any legislation reinforcing civil society (trainings, support) would be most welcome. State building, government building and reinforcing society are needed.

Mr O'Rourke said Iraq has very strong human resources. Elites should bind their fate to their country. PM's example shows that possibility. Iraq must do what it can in order to prevent emigration of its minorities. Emphasis on education is important. He added that neighbours have not been helpful, because they have often short-term approaches: having a strong and stable Iraq is in everybody's benefit.

Mr Boidin mentioned water issues: EU is willing to facilitate water-sharing arrangements. PCA should not become obsolete. He said EU should continue and reinforce its commitment by investing in education and judicial system. A long term investment is indispensable!

6. Mr Jean-Louis de Brouwer, DG ECHO Director, EC

He described the huge humanitarian crisis: there are two million displaced people in Iraq now. To this number, we have to add 1, 1 million internally displaced people from before the ISIL offensive. In addition, Iraq is hosting a consistent number of Syrian refugees. He said that humanitarian organisations witness gross violations of human

rights by all parties in conflict: not only ISIL, but also by other militias and even by the Iraqi Security Forces.

The crisis will become even more acute with the beginning of the winter season. In the South and East of Baghdad, 2 million people in need are totally inaccessible to humanitarian aid. Everything is blocked there. The UN appeals are grossly underfunded. Only 650 million USD are available, a majority of it coming from KSA. Money is badly missing.

A more positive note is that there is no disagreement between KRG and Iraqi Central Government concerning the severity of the refugee crisis. Mr De Brouwer added that UN coordination must be reinforced and that a clear distinction must be made between civilian and military operations, since humanitarian aid must always remain independent, neutral and impartial.

He stressed the need to gain access to inaccessible areas. Another issue he highlighted is that refugees are often moving many times. They benefit from the very generous support from the local communities, but this cannot be enough. A big wake-up call to the international community about the humanitarian situation is needed.

7. Ms Johanna Green, Unrepresented Nations and Peoples (UNPO)

Ms Green started by describing a unique religious and ethnic diversity of the Iraqi society. She said that the human rights situation of minorities has been bad for years, well before the arrival of Daesh, with widespread threats of violence, exclusion, and so on.

ISIL is operating systematic forced changes in the ethnical structure of the territory under its control; therefore it is even more urgent to offer urgent and targeted assistance to all Iraqi ethnical components. Unfortunately, she continued, humanitarian and human rights issues have been side-lined, because priority has been given to the military aspect of struggle against Daesh.

According to UN estimations, 2 million Iraqis have been pushed away from homes. Almost the entire Christian population fled to the Kurdistan Autonomous Region. Shia Iraqi Turkmen were targeted as well. She continued by telling the touching story of Mr Elias, a Yezidi refugee from Mount Sinjar. She described the poor situation of many refugee camps: lack of winterisation efforts, of sanitation (lack of healthcare operators), there is no minimum standard. She also denounced the on-going endemic corruptions, which hampers humanitarian efforts, and spoke about the need to establish property records (Daesh is systematically destroying them).

She concluded on a more positive note, mentioning that Iraqi President Fuad Massoum announced an inclusive reconciliation process.

8. Mr Eugenio Ambrosi, International Organisation for Migration (IOM)

Mr Ambrosi started by pointing out that we have to look at the regional context, especially at the Syrian conflict, to fully understand the entity of the crisis in Iraq. It is a cross-the-border crisis. In total, in Iraq 5, 2 million people are in need of assistance, including local communities within conflict zones.

Moreover, there has been a large displacement in 2014 within the country, which is an additional constraint for the proper functioning of the humanitarian system. In three months and a half, 52% (over a million) of the people have moved. Also in geographical extension, it's a country-wide phenomenon.

He stated that we assist to secondary, and often even to tertiary displacement: this is an indicator of particular vulnerability of displaced population. On the issue of accommodation, Mr Ambrosi said that 58% of refugees/IDPs are hosted by families or relatives. About 35% of overall IDPs are living in a "critical shelter condition", meaning without minimum standards.

Less than half of the displaced people have access to complete health services, including psychological support. It is not surprising that a high number of chronic diseases can be detected among the displaced population. In addition, about two-thirds of children do not have any access to education either because of distance from the nearest school, or lack of funding/resources, or again because many schools, themselves, have been transformed to shelters for displaced people. This potentially lost generation means a major burden for the future of the country:

He concluded by saying that the problem of access to humanitarian aid is compounded by a financial problem: less than 25% of the calculated costs are covered. More than just a wakeup call to the international community would be needed.

9. Ms Rebecca Blackledge, Senior External Relations Associate, UNHCR

Ms Blackledge concentrated on the response to the humanitarian crisis. She said that more than 193.000 Iraqis fled Iraq and are now living in the surrounding countries.

Iraq situation is a "level 3" emergency (the highest in the UN scale), and this implies certain comprehensive actions to be done. There is an increasingly difficult access to safety, because people cannot circulate anymore so easily, due to an increase of internal controls. There is also a lack of documentation: IDPs often do not have any documents with them. But the registration process can be so complicated, that the displaced people are often not able to register, therefore they do not obtain access to whatever assistance provided by the Iraqi or by the provincial Government.

UNHCR also deals with early marriage, forced labour, rape, land issues (destroyed property). There is a huge constraint for access: some areas cannot be accessed at all. Humanitarian community must ensure access to all parts of the country. UN agencies are running short on funds, but also on people.

Then Ms Blackledge spoke about the UNHCR concept of protection: it means ensuring peoples' basic needs (shelter, water, education, sanitation, psychological counselling, etc.). She mentioned winterisation: up to now, UNHCR managed to distribute 559.000 packages of non-food items, which is not a lot and not enough: there is a funding shortfall. She stressed the importance of improving funding.

In conclusion, she recommended to the EU Member States not to return Iraqis to Iraq, given the situation.

10. Mr Vincent de Longeaux, "Fraternity in Iraq" association

The association was created following a massacre in an Iraqi Church, where 52 people were killed.

From 2011 on, the volunteers of the association travel to Iraq every year, at their own expenses. They finance multiconfessional schools and kindergartens. They provide some medical equipment and spend time with families. The association is small, made up of students, without a budget.

Volunteers try to provide shelter to people (fled from Mosul), sleeping on the streets. They bring aid to people in the camps, help with showers, toilets and other practical things. On one side, Mr de Longeaux added, it is comforting to see people not dying of hunger, but on the other side, it is not known when this situation will stop. Many people lost their jobs, even if they have been displaced maybe only 80 km from their homes. There is a problem of alcoholism, prostitution, hopelessness.

Therefore, ISIL must be defeated, villages must be liberated, mines removed. "Let us not abandon refugees in the present situation under the pretext they are safe." Was his key message.

Mr Hamoudi summarised by saying that crisis is very complicated and solution lies in providing financial support. GOI allocated 500 million USD, and every IDP family benefitted from one million Iraqi dinars. It should be possible to cooperate with civil society organisations within Iraq, which could help UN. In this way, it would be cheaper and more effective. First of all, we need to shelter the displaced, he stated. He reminded that one individual offered 1200 tents!

Mr Kanna said the support of Rule of Law is very important, but we should not forget that people can take advantage to get richer and richer: criminalisation of those individuals is needed. The war will not be over with the end of Daesh; a struggle against discrimination must be made. Some countries exported many preachers to spread hatred around the world. More than 700.000 Iraqis left the country because of

this. He also said there should be a place for other NGOs as well, like Save the Children.

Al-Gbouri spoke about the need to enact legislation for reconciliation: EU experience needed. Concerning IDPs, he said all that has been done is good, but not sufficient, we need a plan to allow to the population to return home. Return of refugees and IDPs should receive our attention.

Ms Gomes supported the humanitarian work to be done in common with the Iraqi NGOs, as pointed out by Mr Hamoudi. Concerning ISIL crimes, she said we heard awful reports, and priority should be to rescue the kidnapped Yezidi women. She asked whether GOI is supporting KRG efforts to bring ISIL criminals to the ICC. Moreover, ICC could cooperate with national courts, which could improve the capacities of Iraqi judiciary.

Ms Talabani said that part of the solution should be military, so weapons are needed. Also other aspects should be of course taken into account, the humanitarian one especially. Winter season in Kurdistan is cold and difficult. She said we must recall that resources in KRG are not sufficient. Schooling is also a problem, although books were provided to refugee camps. Teachers among IDPs opened schools. There is hope. She visited a church crowded with Yezidi people. People would like to go back to their normal lives, she concluded. She also told that the so-called ISIL minister of education (a German national) ordered female genital mutilation of school-age girls.

Mr Campbell Bannerman thanked everybody for the participation and highlighted that especially the humanitarian situation and winterisation should be addressed, promising the Delegation for Relations with Iraq will work on these issues in the remit of its competencies.



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2014 - 2019

Delegation for relations with Iraq



DRAFT PROGRAMME

**5th European Parliament - Iraq
Interparliamentary Meeting**

3 - 4 December 2014

Brussels

Wednesday 3 December 2014

20:00-22:00

**Dinner hosted by
Mr David CAMPBELL BANNERMAN
*Chair of the Delegation for relations for Iraq***

Restaurant le Crabe Fantôme

- 9.30 - 10.10** **Introduction by the Chair of the Delegation for relations with Iraq, Mr David Campbell Bannerman MEP and by the first Vice President of the Iraqi Council of Representatives, Dr Humam Baqer Hamoodi**
- 10.10 – 10.40** **The military challenge, fight against ISIL**
Key speakers:
- Ambassador Brett McGurk, USA, Deputy Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL
- 10.40 - 11.30** **Political dialogue on regional issues of common interest, PCA - related cooperation**
Key speakers:
- Mr John O'Rourke, Head of Division Arabian Peninsula, Iran and Iraq at the European External Action Service
 - Mr Jean-Claude Boidin, Head of Unit - Geographical Coordination Central Asia, Middle East/Gulf, Asia Regional Programmes, DG DEVCO, European Commission
- 11.30 - 12.40** **Situation of human rights, humanitarian issues and refugees**
Key speakers:
- Mr Jean-Louis de Brower, DG ECHO Director of Operations, European Commission
 - Ms Johanna Green, Unrepresented Nations and Peoples (UNPO)
 - Mr Eugenio Ambrosi, International Organisation for Migration
 - Ms Rebecca Blackledge, Senior External Relations Associate, Brussels - based UNHCR office
 - Mr Vincent de Longeaux, President of the Association "Fraternity in Iraq", eyewitness account
- 12.40 - 13.00** **Final debate and conclusions of the meeting**
- 13.15** **Lunch offered on behalf of the EP President Martin Schulz**
Paul Henri Spaak, 12th floor, Presidential salon

5th Interparliamentary Meeting European Parliament-Iraq

04 December 2014

Composition of the Delegation

- Mr Sheikh Hummam Hammoudi – ISCI (Head of Delegation)
- Mr Darweesh al Gaburi
- Ms Ala Talabani
- Mr Sadiq al Riqabi
- Mr Yonadam Yossif Kanna, Christian MEP
- Ms Safia SUHAIL
- Mr Mustafa Muhammad Radhi (coordinator - staff)