

Brussels, 14/03/2023

### **The European Parliament Delegation for Relations with the Republic of Iraq visit to Baghdad, Erbil and Mosul**

**The EP Delegation attended the Sixth Inter-Parliamentary Meeting, the first held in Baghdad since 2011, between the European Parliament and the Council of Representatives of Iraq. MEPs held high-level meetings with Iraqi and Iraqi Kurdistan authorities in Baghdad and Erbil and paid a touching visit to war-shattered Mosul.**

The European Parliament Delegation for Relations with the Republic of Iraq (D-IQ), led by its chair, Ms Sara Skyttedal (EPP, SE), and composed by MEPs Domènec Ruiz Devesa (S&D, ES) and Marco Campomenosi (ID, IT), travelled to Iraq from 6 to 9 March 2023.

During the meeting, MEPs engaged in fruitful discussions with their Iraqi colleagues on a range of important issues, including political and economic developments in Iraq, security, human rights, respect of minorities, and regional stability.

MEPs also acknowledged the challenges faced by Iraq in its efforts to build a stable, democratic, and inclusive society, and expressed their continued support for Iraq's political and economic reform agenda. Members also discussed the importance of regional stability, reiterated their condemnation of any forms of foreign interference and violations of national sovereignty, and underscored the importance of a coordinated international response to global and regional challenges. Members of both Parliaments discussed ways to proceed with the establishment of a working Joint Parliamentary Committee as foreseen in the EU-IRAQ Partnership and Cooperation Agreement.

The Delegation was received by H.E. Abdul Latif Rashid, President of the Republic of Iraq and held fruitful exchanges of views with Mr. Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani, Prime Minister and Mr. Fuad Mohammed Hussein, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs. The EP delegation also met with Lieutenant General Giovanni Iannucci, NATO commander in Iraq and Mr. Anders Wiberg, Head of the European Union's Advisory Mission in Iraq.

The second part of the mission was dedicated to Iraqi Kurdistan. In Erbil, Members met with Mr. Nechirvan Barzani, President of the Kurdistan region, representatives from the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) as well as with Mr Hemin Hawrami Deputy Speaker of the Kurdish consultative Council. During the meeting, the current political situation in the Iraqi Kurdistan was also discussed.

On the last day, Members travelled to Mosul where they met Archbishop Najib Mikhael Moussa, a previous nominee for the European Parliament's Sakharov Prize, and visited the EU-funded UNESCO project aiming at rebuilding the old town of Mosul. The EP Delegation finally met with the local community and expressed in the strongest terms their condemnation of the atrocities committed by the Islamic State against Christians and other minorities during the Islamic State (ISIS) occupation of Mosul in 2014. The Delegation finally met with H. G. Mar Abris Youkhanan (Bishop of Erbil of the Assyrian Church).

In concluding the visit, Ms Sara Skyttedal, the Chair of D-IQ delegation, stated that:

*We welcome the resumption of the inter-parliamentary meetings with the Council of Representatives of the Republic of Iraq, which marks a new start in the EU-Iraq parliamentary relations. Based on the constructive exchanges held with our counterpart, we agreed to commit to work on the establishment of a working Joint Parliamentary Committee between our respective parliaments with the aim to upgrade of our bilateral relations.*

*We also express the hope that the new Iraqi government may achieve the necessary reforms to face the most pressing institutional, economic, and social challenges, and to find a sustainable understanding with the Kurdish Regional Government.*

*On the European Parliament side, we end this visit convinced that the EU must continue supporting the democratic transition of Iraq, and working to ensure closer economic and political relations with Iraq in the framework of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement.*

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