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P8_TA(2018)0286

EU-Iraq Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (resolution)**European Parliament non-legislative resolution of 4 July 2018 on the draft Council decision on the conclusion of a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Iraq, of the other part (10209/1/2012 — C8-0038/2018 — 2010/0310M(NLE))**

(2020/C 118/06)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the draft Council decision (10209/1/2012),
- having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Iraq, of the other part ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to the request for consent submitted by the Council in accordance with Article 91, Article 100, Article 207, Article 209 and Article 218(6), second subparagraph, point (a) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (C8-0038/2018),
- having regard to its resolution of 17 January 2013 on the EU-Iraq Partnership and Cooperation Agreement ⁽²⁾,
- having regard to the joint communication from the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) and the Commission of 8 January 2018 on elements for an EU strategy for Iraq,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 22 January 2018 establishing a new strategy on Iraq,
- having regard to the Commission's Multiannual Indicative Programme for Iraq (2014-2017),
- having regard to its resolution of 4 February 2016 on the systematic mass murder of religious minorities by the so-called 'ISIS/Daesh' ⁽³⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 27 October 2016 on the situation in Northern Iraq/Mosul ⁽⁴⁾,
- having regard to UN Security Council resolutions 2367 (2017) of 14 July 2017 and 2379 (2017) of 21 September 2017,
- having regard to its legislative resolution of 4 July 2018 ⁽⁵⁾ on the draft decision,
- having regard to Rule 99(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the opinion of the Committee on Development (A8-0224/2018),

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 204, 31.7.2012, p. 20.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 440, 30.12.2015, p. 83.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 35, 31.1.2018, p. 77.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ C 215, 19.6.2018, p. 194.

⁽⁵⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2018)0285.

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- A. whereas Europe and Iraq are linked by thousands of years of mutual cultural influences and a common history;
- B. whereas Iraq has been ravaged by decades of dictatorial rule by Saddam Hussein, who initiated wars of aggression against Iran in 1980 and against Kuwait in 1990, by crippling sanctions, and by internal conflict after the US-led invasion of 2003, including sectarian violence and Kurdish secessionism, and jihadist terrorism by Daesh; whereas all of these factors explain the magnitude of the challenges that Iraq faces as it strives to make progress towards better governance, economic progress and national reconciliation;
- C. whereas the EU has reaffirmed its commitment to building a strong partnership with Iraq, based on the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, and to supporting the Iraqi authorities throughout the transition to democracy and reconstruction process, while also tackling the root causes of the political, social and economic instability; whereas the reconstruction efforts have been estimated to cost as much as USD 88 billion;
- D. whereas the EU Member States involved in the 2003 war, and the EU as a whole, have a particular responsibility in assisting the Iraqi population and supporting efforts to achieve peace and stability in the country;
- E. whereas parliamentary elections took place on 12 May 2018; whereas in the region, beset with the retrenchment of authoritarian regimes and practices, Iraq provides one of the few examples of a competitive political environment, including a multi-party system and relatively free media; whereas the political forces in the country seem to realise the need to form cross-sectarian alliances in order to enhance the legitimacy and stability of the system; whereas genuine and competitive elections are of fundamental importance for democratic consolidation in Iraq; whereas the full participation of all parts of Iraqi society will be an important step towards an inclusive democracy and a shared sense of nationhood;
- F. whereas a significant improvement in the security situation is needed to promote stabilisation, reconciliation, inclusive governance and economic and social progress in the country both at national and local level; whereas accountability for the crimes committed by all parties is necessary to achieve reconciliation; whereas the EU provides assistance for security sector reform in Iraq through the EU Advisory Mission; whereas the UN Assistance Mission to Iraq (UNAMI) has been present in the country since 2003 and has undertaken significant work in advancing inclusive political dialogue and national reconciliation; whereas NATO continues to carry out its Capacity Building Initiative in Iraq, which focuses on countering improvised explosive devices, explosive ordnance disposal, de-mining, civil-military planning, Soviet-era equipment maintenance, military medicine and reform of Iraqi security institutions;
- G. whereas Iraq faces governance challenges in terms of institutional and administrative capacity-building and consolidating the rule of law, law enforcement and respect for human rights, including women rights and rights of all ethno-religious minorities;
- H. whereas it is important to tackle unemployment and social exclusion, especially among young people, in order to prevent them from becoming radicalised and hence easy recruits for terrorist organisations or other organised crime groups;
- I. whereas the Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service, the main actor behind the liberation of Mosul, suffered heavy casualties and must receive proper recognition and support in order to enhance its recruitment capabilities so that the force can return to an equitable and sustainable size;
- J. whereas the Iraqi authorities should view the country's oil revenues as an opportunity and a tool for achieving sustainable social and economic reconstruction which will benefit Iraqi society as a whole, rather than distributing these revenues on the basis of clientelism; whereas significant oil deposits lie within the autonomous Kurdistan Region of Iraq; whereas it is necessary to normalise relations between the central government in Baghdad and the Kurdistan Regional Government of the autonomous Kurdistan Region of Iraq in line with the provisions of the constitution;

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- K. whereas Iraq is a patchwork of communities often in competition for power and control over national resources; whereas thousands of Iraqi citizens, including from minority communities, and in particular women and girls, were inhumanly exterminated or enslaved by Daesh in acts of war crimes and crimes against humanity; whereas terrorist and extremist groups are still able to easily exploit inter-sectarian and local tensions; whereas more than 1,5 million Christian Iraqi citizens (Chaldeans, Syriacs, Assyrians and members of other Christian minorities) were living in Iraq in 2003, and whereas they constitute an ancient, native population group which is in serious danger of persecution and exile; whereas millions of Iraqi citizens, including Christians, were forced to flee the violence, either leaving their country completely or being displaced within its borders; whereas Kurds make up a significant minority of the population of Iraq, the majority of whom live within the autonomous Kurdistan Region of Iraq;
- L. whereas Daesh, al-Qaeda and like-minded terrorist organisations are inspired by the extreme version of Salafism/Wahhabism; whereas, despite the military and territorial defeat of Daesh, the threat of this ideology still needs to be tackled through improved governance, education, provision of services, de-radicalisation efforts and full inclusion of the Sunni community in the Iraqi political process;
- M. whereas, to date, in a country of 26 million inhabitants, there are 11 million people in need of humanitarian aid, more than 3 million Iraqis have been internally displaced, many of whom are hosted within the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, and there are 246 000 refugees from Syria; whereas providing economic support for internally displaced persons (IDPs) to rebuild their livelihoods is essential for their return;
- N. whereas the territorial defeat of Daesh is the result of the efforts of the Iraqi armed forces, supported by the Global Coalition against Daesh, as well as the various Popular Mobilisation Units, the Peshmerga and other allied forces; whereas, despite the territorial defeat of Daesh in Iraq, the jihadist threat persists and endangers the consolidation of stability and security in the country, especially along the Syrian border; whereas it is necessary, for the reconstruction of the country and the integration of Iraqi society, to surpass the differences based on religious criteria, dissolving the Popular Mobilisation Units and integrating its members according to the needs of the state, a move without which it will not be possible to achieve a functional state based on democracy and pluralism; whereas in 2016 the Iraqi Parliament passed a law that effectively made the constellation of militias a permanent fixture of Iraq's security forces; whereas a united, plural and democratic Iraqi state is the prerequisite for stability and development of the country and its citizens;
1. Welcomes the conclusion of a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) between the EU and Iraq; calls for full use to be made of the mechanisms it establishes in order to deepen the ties between the EU and Iraq;
 2. Stresses that the PCA is an essential instrument for implementing the EU strategy for Iraq and for strengthening our cooperation in the country's reconstruction, stabilisation and reconciliation at national and local level with a long-term strategy; emphasises the importance of Iraqi ownership in the process of building a democratic, federal and pluralist state based on respect for human rights and rule of law;
 3. Welcomes the initiative taken in convening the International Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq, which took place in Kuwait on 12 February 2018; calls for the EU and its Member States to deliver on their financial and technical assistance commitments;
 4. Welcomes the EU's commitment to providing longer term support to the country and the fact that it has identified Iraq as a pilot country in which to better address and operationalise the humanitarian-development nexus in order to foster a transition from humanitarian assistance to longer term reconstruction and stabilisation; recalls that the Iraq crisis is a UN level 3 emergency and that 11 million people are currently in need of assistance; urges the EU and its Member States, therefore, to first of all step up their efforts to urgently address key humanitarian challenges and human needs, in particular regarding the more than 3 million IDPs;

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5. Stresses that poverty is widespread in the country and that, in spite of Iraq being an upper-middle income country, years of violence, conflict and sectarianism have considerably undermined progress in development; calls for the EU to focus its development assistance, through targeted projects, on the most vulnerable groups and the people most in need, namely women and children, young people, IDPs and refugees;

The priorities of EU action in Iraq

6. Calls for the EU and its Member States to maintain the humanitarian assistance they are currently providing to help and protect all Iraqis affected by the conflicts, using aid as a means to help consolidate governance, democracy and rule of law; calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure comprehensive oversight of the financial assistance they have provided to ensure that it is reaching those in need; stresses that all Iraqi people have the legal right to obtain civil documentation and to access aid without any discrimination;

7. Calls for the EU to intensify its cooperation to facilitate the stabilisation and security of recently liberated areas and allow for the safe, informed, voluntary and dignified return of IDPs; calls for the EU to continue supporting the Iraqi authorities to ensure democratic election processes, and to help the Iraqi Independent High Electoral Commission with its efforts to allow IDPs to vote in the elections; encourages the EU to provide technical assistance for enhancing Iraq's capacity in terms of demining and removal of explosive hazards from liberated areas; calls on the Iraqi Government to work towards accelerating the registration processes for demining organisations;

8. Urges the EU and the Member States to provide urgent financial assistance for the reconstruction of priority infrastructure and the restoration of essential public services, such as access to water and sanitation, electricity, education and healthcare, so as to ensure basic living standards for the population, to enhance support for civil society and to prioritise funding for projects that support actors promoting accountability and democratic change; calls on EU Member States to support an urban reconstruction planning process that enables citizen engagement in the decision-making processes related to reconstruction so as to ensure inclusivity in urban planning and recovery with the aim of improving trust between citizens and the state; urges the Commission to ensure that the reconstruction funds provided are spread evenly among communities in need, regardless of the recipients' ethnic or religious identification, and channelled through legitimate state agencies rather than through sub-state actors; believes that financial assistance could also be introduced and distributed to local entrepreneurs and businesses to ensure provision of capital for small and medium-sized enterprises;

9. Calls for the EU to make every effort to encourage the pursuit of a sustained and constructive dialogue between the central authority and the authorities of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, in particular after the September 2017 referendum held in Kurdistan, with a view to establishing stable relations which satisfy both parties, fostering inclusive decision-making at the highest level and fully respecting the country's diversity and the rights of all parts of Iraqi society, as well as the principles of the Iraqi Constitution and the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq; stresses the need to solve the demarcation of the boundary between the Kurdish region and the rest of Iraq through dialogue with UN support; believes that Iraq and the autonomous Kurdistan Regional Government should be able to benefit from oil exports without outside interference; calls also for the EU to promote stronger cooperation between federal and local authorities to effectively rebuild the country and reach long-term stability and a peaceful coexistence; stresses the urgent need for the Kurdistan region of Iraq to implement the necessary political and economic reforms, combat corruption and enable the emergence of functioning new parties and guarantee genuine and competitive elections to the regional parliament in 2018;

10. Believes that, during the transition from emergency assistance to development, a long-term approach, stabilisation, reforms and improvements in the areas of good governance and accountability, education and skills development, access to livelihood opportunities and provision of health and basic social services are priority areas for development assistance; stresses also the importance of reforms to improve the gender balance and the representation of women in the country's political life; looks forward to receiving concrete proposals on envisaged actions that respond to those needs and urges the Commission to provide evidence of the results and impacts achieved within the framework of the multiannual indicative programme 2014-2017;

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11. Expresses its concern at the high degree of fragmentation of Iraqi society; calls for the EU, in coordination with UNAMI and the Iraqi authorities, to fully support the work of the National Reconciliation Commission to promote inter-communal reconciliation and an Iraqi-owned national reconciliation process, to ensure respect for the diversity of Iraq and to promote inclusive and representative governance, at national and local level, which will help strengthen a common sense of Iraqi citizenship; notes that the need for conflict prevention and for addressing security challenges, as well as the demand for reconciliation, mediation and dialogue initiatives, makes it necessary to significantly increase the funds available for such initiatives, mainly through the use of the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP); welcomes the recommendations by Iraqi religious leaders for the Government of Iraq to establish a council of senior clerics and scholars in Iraq, to send a request to the Iraqi Parliament to endorse a law that criminalises extremist religious speeches that incite hatred and violence and to punish those who encourage such acts, to review the curricula and to focus on reconciliation and national citizenship and not on sectarian identity;

12. Encourages the international community and the EU to provide support for preserving the diversity of ethnic, cultural and religious identities in Iraq; calls, within the framework of the Constitution of Iraq, for ways to be explored to recognise, protect and enhance the local self-rule of ethnic and religious minorities living in areas where they have historically had a strong presence and lived peacefully alongside each other — for example in the Sinjar mountains (Yazidis) and the Nineveh plains (Chaldean-Syrian-Assyrian peoples); calls on the Iraqi authorities to allow Kurds, Christians and Yazidis to return to their original areas of residence and to ensure it is safe for them to do so;

Political dialogue

13. Calls for the EU to strengthen its political dialogue with the Iraqi authorities in order to promote respect for human rights and the strengthening of democratic institutions through greater respect for the rule of law, good governance and an efficient judicial system; calls, in this context, for the abolition of the death penalty to be prioritised in this dialogue, and calls on the Iraqi authorities to apply a moratorium on the death penalty with immediate effect;

14. Stresses the need to support the development of Iraqi civil society and its full political representation and participation in the various reform processes; maintains that particular attention should be paid to the representation of women, young people and people from all ethnic and religious groups of Iraqi society, including Christians, Shia and Sunni Muslims, Yazidis and Mandaeans, Shabak, Kurds, Turkmens and others, whose demands need to be addressed; stresses, at the same time, the need to establish as a priority the achievement of an inclusive, non-sectarian political class, representative of all parts forming Iraqi society;

15. Calls for the EU and its Member States, taking into account the body of EU law in the area of combating corruption, to initiate, with the Iraqi authorities, programmes for judicial cooperation and exchange of best practices and effective tools in order to tackle widespread corruption and thereby ensure a fair distribution of the country's wealth; emphasises the importance of the EU as a source of advice to the Iraqi Government on issues of security and governance to ensure the stability of Iraq;

16. Praises the contribution of the Iraqi armed forces to the global fight against the terrorist organisation Daesh; continues to provide support for the comprehensive action to combat terrorism being carried out by the Global Coalition against Daesh, which remains a prominent threat in spite of recent military gains against the organisation, while ensuring respect for international law and human rights; recognises that the fight against terrorism in Iraq is greatly influenced by situations surrounding it, such as the war in Syria; calls for the EU to establish a dialogue on issues relating to the fight against terrorism with a view to reforming anti-terrorism legislation and strengthening the country's capacity to deal with terrorist threats and to work with the Iraqi authorities to combat impunity for any crimes aimed against any group, whether ethnic, religious or other, including minorities in all their forms; understands that the root causes of terrorism must be addressed in order to be able to combat it;

17. Calls for the EU to encourage the Iraqi authorities to adopt a national strategy to deal with crimes committed by Daesh and to accede to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), voluntarily accepting the ICC's jurisdiction to investigate transparently and fairly and ensure accountability for the human rights violations, war crimes and

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crimes against humanity committed by Daesh; stresses the need for credible prosecution of those responsible for the crimes committed by Daesh, with the meaningful participation of victims and the creation of a thorough judicial record of these crimes; is concerned, at the same time, that an excessively broad scope for prosecutions may risk further injustices, impeding future community reconciliation and reintegration;

18. Underlines the need for extensive expertise in issues related to media and freedom of expression when training local media actors in peace journalism;

19. Calls for the EU to acknowledge its responsibility for EU citizens who travelled to Iraq to take part in crimes committed by Daesh and who should be subject to the rule of law and stand trial; calls for clear procedures to be set up between Iraq and the respective EU Member States regarding repatriation and the legal responsibility of those involved;

20. Calls on the Commission to support reform of the judicial system, in particular with regard to transitional justice, in order to ensure compliance with international standards on due process, fair trials and judicial independence and impartiality so as to ensure accountability within government structures; calls also for the EU to work with the Iraqi authorities to combat impunity for any crimes aimed against any groups, whether ethnic, religious or other, including minorities in all their forms;

21. Calls on the Iraqi authorities to prioritise gender equality and the eradication of all violence and discrimination against women and girls, including gender-based violence; stresses in this regard the importance of abolishing the law that exonerates the accused from prosecution for rape, sexual assault, statutory rape, abduction or similar acts if the rapist marries his rape victim;

22. Calls for the EU to promote good and constructive relations between Iraq and its neighbours as well as its role as a contributor to regional peace; underlines that Iraq engages extensively with the United States and Iran, and has recently improved its relations with Saudi Arabia, which could potentially make Iraq a focal point of regional efforts to de-escalate tensions; calls on all parties involved to implement paragraph 8 of UN Security Council Resolution 598 calling for a regional security arrangement among the littoral states of the Persian Gulf;

23. Calls for the EU to work with the Iraqi authorities in the drafting of a national strategy for the protection and exhumation of mass graves in order to preserve mass graves in areas of recent conflicts, with the aim of exhuming and forensically analysing the human remains therein, in order to allow for decent burial of the victims' remains or release to the family, and in order to secure evidence and enable the investigation and prosecution of suspected crimes against humanity; calls also for actions from the EU and the Member States in order to urgently set up a group of experts seeking to collect all evidence of any ongoing international crime, including genocide, wherever such crimes may be committed, in preparation for the international prosecution of those responsible;

24. Calls for an annual commemoration day for the victims of the terrorist atrocities of Daesh, al-Qaeda and similar terrorist organisations to be instituted globally;

Sectoral cooperation

25. Stresses that the reconstruction and stabilisation process must be accompanied by coherent economic and social development policies which benefit all Iraqis in a sustainable and inclusive manner; calls for the EU to engage fully with the Iraqi authorities not only to address the economic and budgetary imbalances but also to promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth capable of generating jobs, particularly for young people, in addition to establishing a framework for trade and creating a favourable environment for investment; calls for the EU to encourage and support Iraq in providing young people who missed out on formal education when they became forcibly displaced by Daesh with opportunities to access formal educational programmes that will equip them with knowledge and skills to improve their chances of getting jobs;

26. Calls for the EU to encourage and support Iraq in the diversification of its economy;

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27. Is concerned about the high drop-out rate among students of both sexes from Iraqi schools (as denounced by civil society organisations, according to which 60 % of those who had enrolled in primary schools in 2015 have since dropped out); highlights that high levels of literacy are key to building positive peace in conflict-affected contexts;

28. Calls for the EU to enhance its cooperation in the education sectors and for education reform in order to ensure access to quality education at all levels and for all, especially minors; recognises the problem of lack of access to school for girls on account of customs, perceptions in society, poverty and safety; calls for the EU to promote awareness regarding the education of girls and to work with the Iraqi Government to improve the situation, as this is crucial for the improvement of their quality of life;

29. Calls for the EU to develop cooperation opportunities in the field of science and research, notably university cooperation and partnerships, in particular as regards Erasmus+ and exchange opportunities in the field of teaching and research;

30. Calls for the EU to pursue and strengthen cooperation on cultural matters in order to protect, preserve and reconstruct the artistic and cultural heritage of Iraq;

31. Welcomes the launch, at the request of the Iraqi authorities and as part of the Iraqi security strategy, of a mission to support security sector reform in Iraq (EUAM Iraq); hopes that this will help strengthen the public institutions and allow an impartial and inclusive police force to be established; underlines that security sector reform in Iraq is an important challenge that should be also supported by the UN; stresses the need to encourage the demobilisation of militias and reintegration of fighters as part of a larger effort to reform the security sector and through tailor-made reintegrating programmes, when needed;

32. Calls for the EU to provide enhanced technical assistance to the Iraqi authorities for sound natural resource management, improved tax collection and the reduction of illicit financial flows, with the aim of ensuring that Iraq will be able to finance its development domestically in the medium term and reduce inequality among its population and its regions; stresses the need to actively advise the private sector and investors with a view to enhancing both conflict sensitivity and their contribution to peacebuilding and sustainable development;

33. Calls for the EU to establish with Iraq, within the framework provided for by the PCA, a dialogue on all aspects of migration, and to implement a human-rights based approach to address migration, bearing in mind the need to find long-term, effective and viable solutions, for the benefit of the citizens of both the EU and Iraq;

34. Stresses that Iraq is a potentially important partner in ensuring the rebuilding of energy-linked infrastructure and a greater diversification of energy sources for Iraq and of sources of supply for the EU; calls for the EU, therefore, to support Iraq in its energy transition and to cooperate with Iraq in establishing common projects and the exchange of good practices and know-how in the key areas of energy efficiency, renewable energy, the environment and efficient management of resources, including water, with the objective, inter alia, of accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals;

35. Recalls that women and girls are disproportionately affected by conflict and extremism, and that they are more vulnerable to violence and abuse, including sexual violence, torture, human trafficking, slavery and child marriage; stresses the need to address the specific humanitarian and development needs of women and girls, particularly in displaced communities; calls for the EU to further promote equality between women and men and women's empowerment through its development efforts and to emphasise the role of women in recovery and peacebuilding in the country;

36. Highlights the need to invest in Iraqi agriculture in view of its high employment potential and the importance of repopulating rural areas, where the population is in constant decline on account of the conflicts;

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37. Commends Iraq's firm commitment to joining the World Trade Organisation and asks the Commission to assist the Iraqi authorities in their efforts to re-join the world economy and trade;

Institutional relations

38. Insists that all assistance provided by the Union is subject to strict compliance with the principles of respect for human rights and the rule of law, and will be accompanied by a constant evaluation process, the results of which the Parliament is to be duly informed in accordance with Article 113 of the PCA;

39. Undertakes to set up, with the Iraqi Parliament, a parliamentary cooperation committee, as provided for by the PCA, so that it can begin its activities, including monitoring the implementation of EU-Iraq cooperation projects;

40. Calls for its Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group (DEG) to include Iraq in its list of priority countries for 2019 and to engage in capacity-building programmes for the Iraqi Parliament; calls on the Commission to support these programmes;

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41. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the President of the European Council, the President of the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the Government and the Council of Representatives of the Republic of Iraq.
