
EU STRATEGY ON IRAQ: NEW PROPOSAL TO STRENGTHEN SUPPORT TO THE IRAQI PEOPLE

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Today, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European Commission adopted a Joint Communication proposing an EU strategy for Iraq in order to address the many challenges the country faces following the territorial defeat of Da'esh.

The proposal outlines both ongoing and longer term EU support to the country, fully taking into account the Iraqi government's priorities.

Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the European Commission said: "Iraq is at a crossroads in its history following the territorial defeat of Da'esh at great sacrifice. It is now crucial to act quickly and rebuild the country with the participation of all the components of Iraqi society, to promote and protect fundamental rights and the rule of law in each and every area: only inclusiveness can guarantee true reconciliation so that Iraqis can close once and for all with the past. This needs international support and we are ready to contribute, to keep supporting the Iraqi people and government in these challenges, for the sake of the people of the country and the region".

Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides, who has visited Iraq several times to assess EU aid projects on the ground said: "The EU has been providing emergency assistance to the Iraqi people since the beginning. Humanitarian needs remain high and many people remain displaced by conflict. I have seen first-hand the suffering in places like Mosul and Fallujah and it is crucial that all aid efforts continue to be impartial and neutral. It is essential to support all Iraqi's in need of assistance today and tomorrow, for as long as it takes."

Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development Neven Mimica, added: "As Iraq takes steps towards a more stable future, the EU is committed to being a key partner in reconstruction, stabilisation and longer term sustainable development. The EU aims to strengthen

concrete support to the Iraqi people in a wide range of areas, to foster economic growth, good governance and strengthening the judicial system as well as boosting education."

The strategy focuses on delivering continued EU humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people and facilitating the stabilisation of areas liberated from Da'esh, with three million displaced Iraqis still unable to return home. It also seeks to address the longer term reform, reconstruction and reconciliation efforts that Iraq needs to pursue in order to consolidate peace and build a united, democratic country in which all citizens can fully enjoy their rights in greater prosperity.

The EU's support focusses on the following strategic objectives:

Preserving the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq and supporting Iraqi efforts to establish a balanced, accountable and democratic system of government;

Promoting sustainable, knowledge-based and inclusive economic growth;

Strengthening Iraq's national identity and reconciliation amongst its diverse communities;

Promoting an effective and independent justice system;

Addressing migration challenges,

Supporting Iraq's good relations with all its neighbours.

The actions proposed in the Joint Communication will be discussed with EU Member States at the Foreign Affairs Council on 22 January and with the European Parliament, and will contribute to a new EU strategy for Iraq.

Background

The European Union's last strategy relating to Iraq was adopted in March 2015 as part of the EU regional strategy for Syria and Iraq, as well as the ISIL/Da'esh threat. This Joint Communication is a natural, next step in the EU's engagement moving beyond the territorial struggle against Da'esh. It responds to the request of the EU Foreign Affairs Council of 19 June 2017 for the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European Commission to present a new strategy to focus on the ways in which the EU can contribute to addressing the specific challenges that Iraq now faces.

In order to implement the proposed strategy, the EU will work closely with the Iraqi government but also with the EU Member States, the United Nations (UN), the Global Coalition against Da'esh, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), as well as other regional and

international partners.

Also, to help consolidate regional and international engagement in support of Iraq, the EU intends to co-chair with the Iraqi Government, Kuwait, the United Nations, the World Bank and other partners a Conference on Iraq's Reconstruction and Development in February 2018. The conference will be hosted by Kuwait and will involve all key donors as well as countries in Iraq's neighbourhood.

The EU foresees a review of this proposed strategy after two years, to assess the impact of the actions outlined therein and to make adjustments as appropriate.

Kaynak/Source: