

Iraq and Syria

The Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Party convening in Budapest, Hungary on 19 to 21 November 2015:

Notes:

- that the situation in the Middle East, particularly in Iraq and Syria has deteriorated significantly, particularly since last summer;
- that the terror organisation Islamic State's (IS) rampage in the Middle East has caused and continues to cause great human suffering in the region;
- that Russia has supported the current Al-Assad regime and started a military campaign striking civilians and all anti regime forces in Syria, while pretending to limit itself to IS; Russia is called upon to coordinate its initiatives with the UN framework as well as the US and its international coalition of Arab and European states;
- that the United Nations has failed to protect civilians from the terror and violence of the Islamic State as well as from the regime in Syria;
- that an increasing number of people are fleeing from Syria and Iraq due to the increased violence;
- that the years of conflict and the lack of humanitarian support have created the risk for a lost generation of children mainly in the area of education;
- that the people in the region suffer from disease and trauma, a lack of medical treatment, food shortages and inadequate sanitation;
- that despite the fact that Iraq is drawn deeper and deeper into sectarian violence, the development of the western-oriented Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) moves forward;
- that the destruction of valuable archaeological sites should be considered as a crime against humanity;

Stresses that:

- stopping and defeating IS must be the priority; this can only be done by military means;
- it is important to support the US and its international coalition of Arab and European states that have launched targeted air strikes against IS in Syria and Iraq. These attacks have proven to be necessary to assist the Kurdish and Iraqi forces on the ground;
- a stable and peaceful Iraq cannot be constructed if the country's political system does not change to be more inclusive towards minorities such as the Sunni Muslims, the Kurds, the Assyrians, Syrians and Chaldeans;

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- the Islamic State is systematically targeting minorities in northern Iraq, for example the Yazidis. The protection of ethnic minority groups should be prioritised in European foreign and development policies;
- Iraq has a responsibility to respect and safeguard minority rights, including the protection of Assyrians, Yazidis, Syrians and Chaldeans;

Calls for:

- a clear foreign and security policy of the European Union to encourage its fight against IS;
- wider support of the international coalition and the European Union including by diplomatic as well as military means;
- providing the Kurdistan Regional Government's military forces with international support, including heavy weapons and military training in order to protect its borders and people, and push back IS;
- increased humanitarian support for affected refugees;
- all countries to accept their responsibility and grant asylum to people fleeing from these regions;
- support for a process to overcome the division between ethnic and religious groups in Syria and Iraq;
- support of the democratic process of the Kurdistan Regional Government;
- an end to Russian bombings of Kurdish and non-IS actors in Syria.

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