



Statement by the Assyrian Confederation of Europe, July 5, 2018

### **ACE applauds European Parliament amendment on local self governance for Assyrians in the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Iraq**

The Council and Iraqi authorities are negotiating a future Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Iraq since a few months. This agreement is based on a previous agreement from 2012. As part of the process, the European Parliament has the possibility to give its opinion and share suggestions to the Council. Tokia Saïfi, French MEP, was designated as rapporteur and wrote the report which passed during the plenary session in Strasbourg on Wednesday 4th July.

The Assyrian Confederation of Europe is proud to present a major amendment to the draft agreement now approved by the parliament. The amendment calls for the Iraqi authorities and the EU to support democratic forms of local administration for Assyrians and Yazidis and: *"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 and the Nineveh plains"*.

ACE is thankful for the cooperation with MEP Saïfi and MEP Weidenholzer who initiated this important amendment and we look forward doing more together to support the people of Iraqi Assyria.

Furthermore the European Parliament insists on the fact that all assistance provided by the Union is subject to strict compliance with the principles of respect of human rights and the rule of law. All assistance will be accompanied by a constant evaluation process. The Assyrian Confederation of Europe supports this statement. Aid must be conditioned on the respect of human rights for all Iraqi citizens, including minorities.

The Assyrian Confederation of Europe calls on the Council to follow the European Parliament recommendations and intends to assist the Council and MEPs in the evaluation process of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement.

The Assyrian Confederation of Europe Brussels, July 5, 2018.