



**THE ROADMAP FOR A NEW ENGAGEMENT
OF THE EUROPEAN UNION (EU) WITH CIVIL
SOCIETY IN IRAQ (2021-2025)**

**CIVIL SOCIETY AS A KEY
DEVELOPMENT ACTOR**





CIVIL SOCIETY IN IRAQ

WHAT ARE THE ROADMAPS?

The Roadmaps for EU engagement with civil society are part of a joint initiative by EU Delegations (EUDs) and their Member States (known as the “Team Europe”) to strengthen the EU partnership with civil society and support its efforts in each of the countries where it is present. These Roadmaps articulate the EU’s commitment to civil society in the design and execution of its programming, as well as in the participation of civil society in the political dialogue that the EU maintains with the authorities, in its technical and financial support to Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), in the integration of CSOs in the cooperation and trade sectors of the EU and in the coordination and division of labor.

The European Union is present in Iraq and supports Civil Society through its different instruments. In order to foster a coordinated approach between the EU Delegation and its Member States, **a specific Roadmap for EU Engagement with civil society has been designed for Iraq.**

In a context in which challenges in relation with the operating environment for civil society seem clear world-wide, **the EU attaches particular importance to supporting the improvement of such an environment, to the capacities of civil society and to the improvement of civil society participation in the public policy cycle.**

WHAT ARE THE PRIORITY THEMATIC SECTORS IN THE EU COMMITMENT TO CIVIL SOCIETY IN IRAQ?

The three priorities of the new Roadmap described below are articulated around a series of priority thematic sectors, which are in line with the overall priorities of the European Union: **a) the green deal, b) migration, refugees and displaced people, c) digitalisation, d) sustainable growth and jobs; e) natural resources management.** In all these five dimensions, **gender equality will be an integral part** of the EU Civil Society Roadmap.

WHAT ARE THE PRIORITIES OF THE NEW ROADMAP FOR THE EU ENGAGEMENT WITH IRAQI CIVIL SOCIETY?

PRIORITY 1

To promote an enabling environment for Civil Society allowing CSOs working in Iraq to better contribute to the development of the country.



Under this priority, the EU will among other initiatives, enable an open **dialogue between the EU, like-minded Development Partners and the Iraqi authorities about civil society space** and about Human Rights-related issues, also promoting a regular **dialogue between the EU and Iraqi civil society actors** in order to collect feedback and follow-up on the regulatory and institutional framework affecting Civil Society in Iraq.

PRIORITY 2

To promote a structured, gender-mainstreamed participation of CSOs in domestic policies as key development players, with a particular focus on

- a) Job creation and economic diversification;
- b) Human development and social contract;
- c) Digital participatory governance and democracy;
- d) security sector reform.



The EU will, under priority 2, **support initiatives such as dialogue forums to discuss public policies, sharing good practices and knowledge on inclusive policy development** and on civil society inclusion in gender-mainstreamed public policy formulation.

PRIORITY 3

To increase local CSOs' capacity including new technical areas to perform their roles as independent development actors more effectively, with a particular accent on

- a) Professional technical sectorial knowledge,
- b) Citizen monitoring and advocacy skills,
- c) Financial sustainability,
- d) Collaboration, networking and alliance-building, in order to amplify the collective voice of Iraqi civil society.



This priority will be aimed both at NGOs but also at new, **emerging civil society actors** particularly youth groups, small and those based outside the country's main cities and capital, also putting a particular focus on developing capacities of women-led, gender-focused organisations.

The Roadmap for EU engagement with Civil Society is neither a political strategy nor a EU-funded project. On the contrary, it is aimed at reinforcing the joint work among different Civil Society actors and between these actors and public authorities around what has been identified as an issue of national interest.