



**Speech by Christoph Buik, EUAM Iraq Head of Mission
EUAM Iraq Medal Parade on 17 November 2021, Baghdad**

*Excellencies, distinguished guests,
Mission members on parade,
Colleagues and friends,*

It is my honour and privilege to welcome you all to this Medal Parade Ceremony, to pay tribute to the personnel serving in the European Union Advisory Mission Iraq for their efforts and dedication.

*First, I would like to thank our guests from the EU Delegation, the EU Member States and Third Contributing Countries for joining us on this important occasion.
Allow me to express my special thanks to the Head of the EU Delegation, Ambassador Ville Varjola, together with his valuable staff, for his continuous support to our Mission.*

I also want to express my gratitude to our Iraqi counterparts for their cooperation and forthcoming approach, and the fruitful collaboration with our international partners.

It is indeed a great pleasure to be together today as a big European family, enlarged by our friends from Australia, Canada and Norway. As you know, I am a strong supporter of the “EU integrated approach” and I truly believe that we can achieve our common objective in bringing peace, stability and prosperity to Iraq only by working together, in accordance with our respective mandates. Only together, can we make a difference.

I am fully aware of the limits of what we can accomplish in such a challenging context. Nonetheless, I am convinced that our achievements, however small, can make a valuable contribution to the long-term goal of a better, peaceful and prosperous Iraq.

Having said that, I would like to commend and thank my colleagues, who have served with extraordinary commitment and determination, to advance the Mission's noble objectives.

The Medal is awarded to Mission Members who have served at least 30 days in the area of operations without demerit. Medals are distributed on behalf of the High Representative and Vice President of the Commission, and the authority is delegated to the Head of Mission through the Civilian Operation Commander.

A total of 27 police officers and civilian staff from 15 Member States are eligible to receive the Medal today. All these individuals have engaged in a variety of difficult and important activities that contribute to effective implementation of the Mission's mandate.

Each of them has served with great dedication, commitment and professionalism, and should be proud of what they have achieved.

Once again, I congratulate the women and men of my Mission who are receiving their well-deserved medals.

Thank you for the work that you have done and thank you for the work that you will continue to do.