



# العراق وجيرانه

IRAQ AND ITS NEIGHBOURS

Enhancing Dialogue and Regional Integration in West Asia

## PRESS RELEASE

CARPO and the EastWest Institute (EWI) on 3 July 2019 officially launched the initiative “**Iraq and its Neighbours – Enhancing Dialogue and Regional Integration in West Asia**” – funded by the European Union (EU). The launch event was hosted by Casa Árabe in Córdoba, Spain, and attended among others by Deputy Foreign Minister of Iraq H.E. Nazar Khairallah and Secretary General of the European External Action Service H.E. Helga Schmid.

"The European Union strongly supports Iraq's policy of balanced outreach to all its neighbours", said Secretary General Helga Schmid at the opening panel of the launch event. "Given the current tensions in the region, providing avenues for dialogue and regional cooperation is more important than ever."

Deputy Foreign Minister Khairallah underlined the importance of trade relations for regional integration. "The best ways to counter distrust in the region is to foster economic cooperation and to build prosperity through healthy competition."

This 18-months project envisions Iraq as the center-point for regional dialogue and cooperation rather than as a theater of proxy wars and conflict. It envisages a series of bilateral and multilateral workshops to facilitate dialogue between civil society advisors from Iraq and its immediate neighbours Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Kuwait, with the aim of identifying and operationalizing tangible avenues for cooperation and coordination on issues of shared interest and concern. They will also discuss the current and future role of the EU both in Iraq and the region as a whole.