



COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION

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Council Conclusions on Iraq

*2870th EXTERNAL RELATIONS Council meeting
Brussels, 26 and 27 May 2008*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The EU reaffirms its support to a secure, stable, democratic, prosperous and unified Iraq and reiterates its commitment to the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq, where human rights are respected. It underlines its support for the central role of UN/UNAMI in Iraq and strongly encourages continued close cooperation between UNAMI and the Iraqi authorities on the implementation of UNSCR 1770.
2. The Council welcomes the visit to Brussels by Prime Minister Maliki and members of his government on 16 - 17 April and the opportunity to enhance the EU's political engagement with Iraq.
3. The Council welcomes the Expanded Ministerial Conference of the Neighbouring Countries of Iraq in Kuwait on 22 April 2008 and underlines the importance of dialogue and co-operation between Iraq, its neighbours and regional partners. Constructive engagement of Iraq's neighbours and partners in the region remains essential to achieve peace and stability in Iraq and in the region as a whole. The Council encourages all neighbours and partners in the region to live up to the commitments made in the Final Communiqué of the Kuwait meeting and to strengthen their representation in Baghdad. The EU stands ready to support the neighbouring countries process and to provide its expertise where participants deem this helpful.

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4. The Council also looks forward to the First Annual Review Conference of the International Compact with Iraq (ICI) in Stockholm, Sweden, on 29 May 2008. An EU Member State hosting the Annual Review Conference is a reflection of the EU's commitment to its partnership with Iraq. The Council urges strong Iraqi leadership and ownership in the implementation of the ICI, Iraqi sector wide inclusiveness and broad involvement of the international community including Iraq's neighbours and partners in the region. It also commends the progress made so far on economic aspects of the ICI, the passage of the Justice and Reconciliation, Amnesty, Provincial Powers Laws and the budget. It encourages the Government of Iraq to make further progress in the political process and in national reconciliation. The EU will continue to develop a close co-operation and partnership with Iraq in accordance with the priorities indicated in the ICI and will do its utmost to assist Iraq in the implementation of the ICI together with the international community.
5. The Council underlines the importance of national reconciliation and welcomes initiatives of all parties to meet this end, including the 15-point statement issued by the Iraqi Political Committee for National Security. The EU encourages all parties to strengthen work in this area, consolidating the rule of law and national reconciliation.
6. The Council welcomes political agreement to hold provincial elections before the end of 2008 and strongly encourages the Government of Iraq and the Council of Representatives to adopt the necessary legislation and provide the funding in support of those elections. It also strongly encourages agreement on the hydrocarbon law as another important contribution towards national reconciliation. It expresses strong hope that the Constitutional Review Committee will be able to contribute to resolving outstanding issues. It welcomes the commitment of Iraq's political leaders to a government of national unity leading to further progress on the legislative and reform programme. It commends efforts made by the UN and others in solving issues related to the disputed internal boundaries.
7. The Council recalls that further improvements in the security situation in Iraq are central to the Government of Iraq's efforts to build a stable and prosperous state. It condemns all acts of terrorism in all its forms in Iraq and calls for the immediate cessation of all such acts. It supports the Iraqi Government's increasing efforts in combating terrorism and sectarian violence and to disarm militia forces.
8. The Council expresses concern about the displaced Iraqis inside Iraq and Iraqi refugees in neighbouring countries, in particular in Jordan and Syria. It recalls the obligation of the Government of Iraq and the international community, as expressed at the Expanded Neighbours Ministerial Conferences, to protect and assist displaced Iraqis inside Iraq and in neighbouring countries by addressing their immediate and foreseeable needs and ensure their safety. It strongly encourages the Iraqi Government to use its resources to help neighbouring countries to cope with the additional burden of refugees.

9. The Council expresses concern about the human rights situation in Iraq, and supports the work of the UNAMI in this field. The Council reiterates that it is essential for the Government of Iraq to protect and promote the human rights of all Iraqis, paying special attention to vulnerable groups such as children, women and persons belonging to religious and ethnic minorities. Increased respect for human rights is essential to achieve reconciliation between Iraq's communities and sustain improvements in the security situation. The promotion and protection of human rights in Iraq will also greatly benefit from strengthening of the rule of law in general, including by ensuring the neutrality and inclusiveness of the Iraqi judiciary and security forces. The Council calls upon the Iraqi Government to suspend the practice of the death penalty as a step towards abolition.
10. The Council recalls its strong commitment to Iraq as reflected in the priorities set out by the GAERC on 19-20 November 2007 for future assistance to Iraq. Taking into account the €829 million already committed by the European Community in reconstruction and humanitarian support since 2003, the additional substantial contributions from EU Member States, and the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq, the EU:
 - commits to provide further assistance to basic services and to strengthen Iraqi institutions and capacities to unlock Iraq's own resources;
 - welcomes the substantial progress on the negotiations on the Trade and Cooperation Agreement and states its determination to conclude negotiations as soon as possible, thereby establishing the first contractual relationship between the EU and Iraq;
 - aims to enhance energy co-operation in the mutual interest of the EU and Iraq;
 - notes the significant diplomatic EU presence in Baghdad, including the EC Delegation, and expresses intentions for further strengthening the EU presence;
 - looks forward to enhancing the current political dialogue at ministerial and senior official level with Iraq, including through regular meetings, and building on the mutual desire to take such a dialogue forward;
 - underlines the importance of establishing a system of rule of law and a culture respecting human rights, welcomes the Commission's programme supporting the rule of law and justice sector and stresses the important role that the EUJUST LEX has played to this end;
 - underlines its readiness to consider ways to build on the significant contribution of EUJUST LEX when its mandate comes to an end;
 - will explore possibilities to provide further expert assistance to the secretariat of the International Compact;
 - accepts the invitation to the EU, including the Commission, to participate in the three Expanded Neighbouring Countries of Iraq working groups on refugees, energy and security cooperation and coordination;
 - commits to provide further contributions to help alleviate the humanitarian situation of displaced Iraqis inside Iraq and Iraqi refugees in neighbouring countries in particular in Jordan and Syria;
 - welcomes support from the Community budget provided already for the preparations for local elections scheduled to be held before the end of the year."