



PRESS RELEASE

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EU and Iraq sign an agreement on a 64 billion Iraqi dinars (42 Mio Euros) Capacity Building Programme

The European Union and the Government of Iraq signed today a cooperation agreement worth around 64 billion Iraqi dinars (€ 42 million) during a ceremony in Baghdad in the presence of Mr. Mehdi Alalak, Deputy Minister of Planning and Development Cooperation, and Mr. Jobst von Kirchmann, Head of Development Cooperation of the European Union to Iraq.

"This agreement marks a new chapter in the development cooperation between the EU and Iraq. It reflects the improved and deepened partnership with the Government of Iraq, based on the principle of combining Government's efforts on infrastructure with the EU's support to capacity building» explained Mr. von Kirchmann. This programme will focus on improving the access to and the quality of education. Moreover, it will strengthen the capacity of selected Iraqi institutions such as the Independent High Electoral Commission and the Independent High Commission of Human Rights, in order to build the capacity of Iraq's governance structure and to reinforce its rule of the law system.

This agreement demonstrates the European Union's firm commitment to the continued reconstruction of Iraq and its dedication to improve the quality of life of Iraq's population. By means of this programme, the EU maintains ongoing efforts to build the capacity of Iraqi institutions during this period of transition in Iraq.

The activities under this Agreement were developed in close collaboration with Iraq's authorities. The objectives of this programme are fully in accordance with the priorities put forward by the Government of Iraq and its international partners. The programme comprises four main components and will take into account cross-cutting issues such as protection of vulnerable groups such as displaced Iraqis and their host communities, ethnic and religious minorities, children and gender equality.

- **Component 1: Improved Access to Basic Education in Iraq** (around 26 billion Iraqi dinars) (€ 17 million) – The education system has been severely hampered by the political and security situation, lack of resources and emigration of teachers. Numerous challenges need to be overcome before the Iraqi education system may return to be a model for the region. This component aims at increasing the capacity of the Government in the education sector with a view to providing technical support at the national, governorate, and local levels.
- **Component 2: Support to Improving the Quality of Education in Iraq with a focus on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)** (around 13 billion Iraqi dinars) (€ 8.5 million) -

This component also focuses on education and targets quality in schools and in the TVET sectors. It will build the capacity of Iraqi TVET institutions so that they can meet the dynamic needs of local communities, economy and industry.

- **Component 3: Technological Capacity Building Support to the Independent High Electoral Commission of Iraq (IHEC)** (around 11.5 billion Iraqi dinars) (€ 7.6 million) - aims at ensuring that Iraqi electoral processes are conducted openly and transparently through a targeted support to the national institution in charge of the organisation of elections.
- **Component 4: Capacity Building for the Independent Human Rights Commission (IHRC)** (around 10 billion Iraqi dinars) (€ 6.6 million) - support to the newly established IHRC.

The Program also includes an external monitoring component (around 3 billion Iraqi dinars) (€ 2.3 million). The monitoring of all above mentioned component will improve the quality of assistance and allow the contracting parties to react quickly and effectively to the evolution of the intervention.

The EU will finance all capacity building measures mentioned above, while the Government will, in parallel, provide a strong in-kind contribution to the objectives of the agreement through an ambitious infrastructure development programme. Thus, the EU capacity building support will be accompanied by the construction and rehabilitation of schools, technical and vocational education training centres, technical schools, and technical colleges throughout Iraq; provision of textbooks, supplies, furniture, and IT equipment to schools; access to Government facilities for training of staff under the different programme components; provision of the necessary financial means, following the creation of the Independent High Commission of Human Rights, to provide the appropriate staffing for the Commission and an appropriate operational budget; and support to project management and implementation.

With this programme the EU's contribution to the development of Iraq has almost reached (around 1.5 trillion Iraqi dinars) (€ 1 Billion) since 2003. The EU remains committed to supporting Iraq in the coming years.

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For more information:

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