

## COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON IRAQ

(GAERC, 23-24 February 2009)

1. The Council welcomes the holding of provincial elections in Iraq on 31 January 2009 and congratulates the people of Iraq for having successfully expressed their democratic will. The elections were well organized and conducted in a competitive and generally peaceful environment with freedom of expression widely respected across the country. The elections are an important step towards a consolidation of the democratisation process and reconciliation.
2. In this context, the Council commends the work by the Independent High Electoral Commission supported by UNAMI, with technical and financial support from the European Community, in organising these elections with a challenging timetable. The EU will examine the possibility of providing similar support for future elections.
3. The Council underlines the importance of using the outcome of these elections to make further progress on improving the lives of the Iraqi people as well as on national reconciliation in Iraq. In this context, it encourages the new Provincial Councils to respond to the expectations of the Iraqi people by delivering inter alia much needed basic services and related investment.
4. The experience gained from these elections will hopefully contribute to further consolidation of the democratisation process, including the country's legislative and constitutional framework, and to laying a solid foundation for Iraq's next set of elections. The EU, in cooperation with its international partners, will continue to support Iraq in its efforts to build a secure, stable, democratic, unified and prosperous country where human rights are respected and reiterates its commitment to the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq.

## COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON IRAQ

(GAERC, 15 -16 June 2009)

1. The Council welcomes the announcement of national elections no later than the end of January 2010 and of parliamentary and presidential elections in the Kurdistan Region on 25 July 2009 and stresses the need to keep the planned timetable for both sets of elections. Recalling the Council conclusions of February 2009, the EU will seek to provide further support to elections in Iraq.
2. The Council continues its strong support of UNAMI's role in providing assistance and reconstruction to the people of Iraq. Furthermore, the Council continues to support the efforts of UNAMI in assisting Iraq by contributing to discussions on disputed internal boundaries, including Kirkuk. The Council underlines the need for dialogue and willingness to compromise from all parties in order to build a state where long-lasting peace and rule of law prevail and to achieve national reconciliation between all of Iraq's communities. The Council also encourages the Iraqi authorities to further intensify their efforts to increase transparency and to combat corruption.
3. The Council reiterates its support for Iraq's re-engagement with its neighbours and international institutions, in accordance with relevant UN resolutions. It also calls on regional partners, including the Arab League to continue active dialogue and cooperation with Iraq, for the sake of unity, integrity and sovereignty of the country as well as for the peace and stability of the whole region. In this context the Council welcomes the increased high level dialogue and further opening of diplomatic missions, at the same time it encourages progress in negotiations on debt relief by regional partners.
4. The EU remains concerned about the human rights situation, in particular the situation of women and vulnerable groups such as persons belonging to religious and ethnic minorities. The Council calls on the Iraqi government to seriously consider UNAMI recommendations. It also remains committed to supporting the Iraqi efforts to strengthen respect for human rights including through further institution building.

5. The EU underlines its unequivocal opposition to the death penalty and is deeply concerned about recent executions. The Council calls on Iraq to resume the de facto suspension of the execution of the death penalty, which had been observed in Iraq from August 2007 until May 2009, pending legal abolition.
6. The EU will continue to work closely with the many other international actors operating in Iraq to maximise the impact of development work in-country under Iraqi leadership. The EU and its member states will continue to coordinate on their bilateral programmes with the Government of Iraq to further complement the international community's efforts. In this context, the Council underlines the EU determination to strengthen donor coordination in order to promote aid effectiveness in line with agreed international principles.
7. The Council welcomes the significant progress made in negotiations between the EU and Iraq on a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. It underlines its desire to conclude negotiations as soon as possible following the last successful round on 25-27 May 2009. This Agreement will be of mutual benefit to Iraq and the EU, and will provide a solid platform for the development of further ties between the two parties. Equally, the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on energy cooperation will further enhance the relationship between the EU and Iraq.

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