



# EU-IRAQ RELATIONS



## EU RESPONSE TO IRAQ CRISIS

The EU is a long-term partner of Iraq, cooperating in the field of **humanitarian aid, stabilisation, security and the political reform agenda**.

In response to the challenges Iraq is facing following the territorial defeat of Da'esh, including ongoing humanitarian, stabilisation, early recovery, reform and reconciliation needs, the EU adopted on 22 January 2018 a new [EU strategy for Iraq](#). The strategy demonstrates the EU's continued commitment to support the Iraqi people and their government as they seek to tackle these key challenges.

Iraq has been suffering decades of violence and armed conflict, but the successful campaign to defeat Da'esh gives hope for a peaceful future of the country. Iraq now stands at a cross-road. The EU **is ready to assist the country in building its post-Da'esh future** focussing on inclusive governance and social cohesion. In this context, the EU has **increased its diplomatic outreach to Iraq and further funds under the strategy are being mobilised rapidly**. The EU will also seek maximum coordination between the EU and Member States' interventions.

### THE EU'S SUPPORT SO FAR

#### 1) Political support

The European Union is deeply committed to continue working with the Iraqi government and population for the stabilisation and reconciliation of the country, supporting Iraq's **unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity**. In its contacts with the Iraqi authorities, the EU emphasises the

importance of an **inclusive process of reconciliation both at national and local level**, and the need to **make tangible progress on political reforms to enable full national reconciliation**.

With programmes worth more **than €46 million, the EU is supporting local and regional governments** in order to have their own local development plans and stronger and accountable governance for their citizens. Those go from community based projects to nation-wide initiatives to break the cycle of sectarian violence.

Also, the EU has committed **over €29 million to support projects linked to reconciliation**, ranging from conflict reduction between IDPs and host communities through dialogue initiatives, to the response to concerns related to missing persons such as support to investigations conducted through the International Commission on Missing Persons.

#### 2) Leading humanitarian and development efforts

The Iraq crisis is a UN Level-3 emergency with over 11 million people in need of humanitarian aid, in a country of 36 million. This includes 3 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and 246 000 refugees from Syria.

The EU has [led the international humanitarian and development efforts](#) for the Iraq crisis, providing some **€650million of funding overall in the period 2014-2017**, in order to **respond to the humanitarian crisis and support the stability and development in the country**.

## HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

EU total humanitarian assistance in Iraq since 2014 amounts to **€370 million** and has been a lifeline for the most vulnerable.

In 2017, the EU provided **€82.5 million** to Iraq in humanitarian aid. Support is provided to those most affected by the conflict and throughout the country. This includes **daily, lifesaving provision of protection support, water, shelter, food and emergency medical assistance**.

For example, **the EU has been at the forefront of the emergency humanitarian response in Mosul, Tel Afar, Hawija and West Anbar** and has provided vital support to displaced persons and conflict affected populations in newly retaken and hard to reach areas. The EU humanitarian aid focuses on the most vulnerable persons and will continue to **assist displaced people unable to or prevented from returning** to their areas of origin. The EU also helps families deal with severe trauma through **mental health services**. Psychosocial support projects will be extended to the traumatized population elsewhere in Iraq as well as **assistance to victims of physical and sexual violence**.

The EU pays particular attention to **child protection and education in emergencies**, offering also learning spaces and schools in and out of the camps for the over 3 million IDPs throughout the country.

All EU humanitarian aid is **impartial and independent, delivered only on the basis of needs** and putting respect for international humanitarian law and protection of civilians at the forefront.

## DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

**Longer term actions are funded via the EU Development Cooperation Instrument**. For the period 2014-2017, the total EU development assistance to Iraq amounted to **€124.4 million**. This amount was topped up in 2017 with **€60.4 million towards stabilisation and demining** and further actions are being prepared.

EU development cooperation with Iraq focusses mainly on three sectors: **good governance, stabilisation, primary and secondary education and sustainable energy**.

## 3) Stabilisation of liberated areas SUPPORT FOLLOWING THE LIBERATION OF AREAS HELD BY DA'ESH

The recovery of all occupied Iraqi territories from the hands of Da'esh was a watershed moment. The EU has [paid tribute](#) to the courage of the people of Iraq, its Government and the armed forces, and to the sacrifice in military and civilian lives that the Iraqi people have made to achieve this victory.

**The continued swift and effective stabilisation of the areas liberated from Da'esh** building on the successes achieved so far, is key to the safe, voluntary and dignified return of the remaining internally displaced, and is also essential for **reconciliation and for longer term stability in Iraq**.

**Continuing to ensure the protection of civilians after the conduct of hostilities is crucial** to avoid new cycles of violence and foster durable peace.

EU work on stabilising liberated areas in Iraq focusses on **demining**, in coordination with the UN, **support to the return of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), and support to early recovery and resilience of the local population**.

## DEMINING AND DECONTAMINATION OF LIBERATED AREAS

Donor coordination for stabilisation purposes is essential. This is why **the EU leads the counter-Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) action of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)** and is one of the main donors to decontaminate areas recovered from Da'esh alongside the state members' contribution.

The EU delegation in Iraq **chairs the Global Coalition's sub-working group on explosive hazard mitigation**, where the concept of a "blended approach" to decontamination was developed. Such an approach brings together all relevant actors involved in clearing IEDs, such as UNMAS, NGOs, contractors and the local and central Iraqi authorities. Efforts are also joined up for **risk education campaigns for IDPs, humanitarian assistance and reconstruction efforts**. Most importantly, the actors were brought together to share knowledge and develop a clearance standard that could be used to train more local actors.

The decontamination is already showing important results. **In Ramadi alone, more than 6,000 students were able to return to their studies** thanks to the clearance of the university. Another **2,000 people were able to return to the city's teaching hospital** and resume their jobs. Nevertheless the needs remain enormous and the EU will be looking to step up its support in this area.

## **FACILITATING THE RETURNS OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPS)**

IDPs are striving to return to their homes. It is a race against time to make sure that they can do it in a **safe, voluntary, informed and dignified manner**, reducing conflicts within communities with the **ultimate objective of achieving a stable and prosper Iraq**.

That is why beside humanitarian assistance, the EU has been active in **starting work in the security sector, counterterrorism and de-contamination of liberated areas**.

The EU further contributes substantially to the UNDP Funding Facility for Stabilisation to facilitate the voluntary, safe and dignified return of IDPs to the areas retaken from Da'esh.

## **SUPPORTING EARLY RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE OF THE LOCAL POPULATION**

To make sure that the population has **increased income and livelihood opportunities**, the EU contributes **€107.5 million** under the [EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis](#) for projects benefitting the Iraq population.

The Trust Fund **supports demining efforts, job creation for IDPs, refugees and host communities, rehabilitation of selected irrigation infrastructure, provides access to higher education, and increases health authority resilience and capacities of and local administration to respond to the crisis**.

In order to make sure that **all Iraqi children have equal access to quality education**, the EU supports programmes for **almost €36 million** in this key area. Working in partnership with civil society organisations and local and central governments, particular emphasis is laid **on inclusive education for vulnerable school-age children** (6-17) including IDPs, refugees and children with disabilities.

## **4) Support in Security sector**

The fight against terrorism cannot be won through military action alone. The EU is therefore has been **supporting the security sector and the rule of law in Iraq with over €16 million**.

Training of local police in areas liberated from Da'esh is funded by the EU and carried out by the Italian Carabinieri. The EU is also boosting the pre-deployment capacity of the police in Iraq, working to **improve the interoperability of Iraqi security services and support to criminal justice**.

## **COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY MISSION TO SUPPORT SECURITY SECTOR REFORM**

In response to a request from the Iraqi authorities for support in the civilian security sector reform area, and in line with the [Council conclusions on Iraq of 19 June 2017](#), the EU agreed [on 17 July 2017](#) to send a **civilian CSDP mission in Baghdad**. The EU Assistance Mission (EUAM) was **officially launched on 16 October 2017 and deployed in November 2017**.

The mission is focused on **assisting the Iraqi authorities in the implementation of the civilian aspects of the Iraqi Security Strategy**. EU experts are providing advice and assistance in priority work areas responding to the needs of the relevant authorities.

This Mission **will complement the existing EU engagement in the humanitarian and development fields**.

## **5) Counter-terrorism**

The EU is actively supporting the **improvement of Iraqi counterterrorism efforts by helping the Iraq authorities to develop a human-rights compliant Iraqi counter-terrorism strategy**.

In order to **improve information sharing and coordination mechanisms**, the EU is working with the Iraqi law enforcement and intelligence services in line with the United Nations' needs assessment for Iraq.

At the same time, the EU is supporting **programmes for conflict reduction and contributes €10 million to actions to break the cycle of sectarian violence**.