



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council Conclusions on Iraq

*2902nd GENERAL AFFAIRS Council meeting
Brussels, 10 November 2008*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The Council recalls its conclusions of May 2008. It reaffirms its desire for a secure, stable, democratic, prosperous and unified Iraq in which human rights are respected, and reiterates its commitment to the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq. It welcomes both the progress achieved in improving the security situation and the steps taken towards national reconciliation with the adoption of the law on provincial elections, the holding of which is essential in reinforcing democracy and the rule of law. It notes the adoption of an amendment to that law stipulating the conditions for the representation of persons belonging to minorities. It hopes that the elections will be held at the beginning of 2009 as planned.
2. The Council notes with satisfaction that a number of neighbours and partners in the region have honoured the commitments undertaken in the Final Communiqué of the Conference of the Neighbouring Countries of Iraq in Kuwait in April 2008 and have strengthened their representation in Baghdad. Constructive engagement of Iraq's neighbours and partners in the region remains essential to peace and stability. It urges all neighbouring countries and partners to follow suit. The EU continues to support the process set in motion by the neighbouring countries of Iraq and is ready to take part in a forthcoming expanded ministerial conference.

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3. The Council continues to be concerned by the human rights situation and in particular the situation of women, children and those belonging to the ethnic and religious minorities, and welcomes the commitment undertaken by the Iraqi government to take action in this area. In this context, it supports the action by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) and reiterates the need to afford particular protection to all vulnerable groups.
4. It emphasises the importance of a renewed commitment by the European Union on the rule of law via Community assistance, the ESDP mission and Member States' own programmes. The Council agrees in particular to extend the mandate of the integrated "rule of law" mission for Iraq, EUJUST LEX, with effect from June 2009. This will allow the mission to conduct progressive and experimental pilot activities, where security conditions permit, in the area of the rule of law on Iraqi territory.
5. The Council approves the central role taken by UNAMI and welcomes the progress achieved in implementing United Nations Security Council resolutions 1770 and 1830. It encourages continued close cooperation between UNAMI and the Iraqi authorities.
6. The Council welcomes the substantial progress achieved in negotiations on the trade and cooperation agreement and states its determination to conclude the negotiations as speedily as possible. This will enable contractual relations to be established between the EU and Iraq for the first time and a structured and regular political dialogue at both the technical and the political level to be embarked upon. It would open the way for a deepening of relations in specific areas, such as energy, in particular by the rapid conclusion of a memorandum of understanding on energy.
7. The EU remains committed to developing its partnership with Iraq in accordance with the principles of the International Compact with Iraq. It welcomes the holding of the First Annual Review Conference of the Compact in Stockholm last May, encourages progress in the Compact's implementation and invites all parties to honour the commitments made on that occasion."
