

Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the EU on the Annual Review

Conference of the International Compact with Iraq

The EU welcomes the Annual Review Conference of the International Compact with Iraq in Stockholm, Sweden on 29 May 2008. An EU member state hosting this event strongly manifests the EU's support to the partnership with the Government of Iraq and to the principles of the International Compact with Iraq and underlines the EU's clear commitment to contribute to the political and economic reconstruction of Iraq.

The EU reaffirms the goal shared with the Government of Iraq of a secure, stable, democratic, prosperous and unified Iraq where human rights are respected and reiterates its commitment to the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq.

The EU recalls its support for the International Compact with Iraq and welcomes the Annual Review Report (May 2007 - May 2008) entitled "A New Beginning", which reflects the progress made since the launch of the ICI and indicates how the Government of Iraq intends to ensure further progress in the implementation of the Compact. The broad involvement of the international community, including Iraq's neighbours is vital for further achievement of the agreed bench marks and promotion of sustainable development.

The EU supports the Government of Iraq's proposed mutual priority areas for 2008-9, in addition to national reconciliation and further consolidation of the economy and the security situation, as being human development, human rights, reconstruction and anti-corruption. The EU is concerned about the human rights situation in Iraq, including that of vulnerable groups such as children, women, religious and ethnic

minorities, and welcomes the expressed commitment by the Government of Iraq to improve the situation throughout the country. Increased respect for human rights is essential to achieve reconciliation between Iraq's communities and sustain improvements in the security situation.

The EU recalls the obligation of the Government of Iraq and the international community to protect and assist displaced Iraqis inside Iraq and in neighboring countries. It supports the stated commitment of the Government of Iraq to cooperate with host countries and the international community to address the needs of displaced Iraqis and help in their return or resettlement.

It commends the progress made so far on economic aspects of the ICI and welcomes the Government's 6-point proposal entitled "Partnership for Development". It notes the progress on the political and legislative agenda including the passage of a number of laws such as the Justice and Reconciliation, Amnesty, Provincial Powers Laws and the budget and it calls upon the Government of Iraq to ensure a swift implementation of these laws, while it strongly encourages the Government of Iraq to make further progress in the political process and on national reconciliation and other important legislative challenges as the Hydrocarbon Law. 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 others of the international community. The EU recalls that further improvements in the security situation in Iraq are key 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.

The EU encourages the Government of Iraq to continue the review and the strengthening of the Compact architecture, including the Secretariat, with

the aim of aligning planning procedures and the work of the thematic working groups to the priorities identified in the Compact. The EU underlines the importance of 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 fully agrees with the principle of Iraq co-financing of new development programmes in order to ensure ownership. The EU stands ready to offer its expertise for the political process and economic reconstruction wherever the Government of Iraq deems this helpful.

The EU underlines its strong support to the central role of the UN in Iraq as formulated in the UNSCR 1770, and its role of co-chair of the International Compact, and will continue its close cooperation with UNAMI and the Iraqi authorities in supporting the implementation of the resolution.

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 is ready to support the further implementation of the ICI by contributing to the Partnership for Development in accordance with Iraqi priorities. 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 and will continue providing assistance in this area through the Commission's programme and the EUJUST LEX; 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; will continue support to the preparations for local elections scheduled to be held before the end of the year through funding provided already.