



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Luxembourg, 22 April 2013**

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**OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS**

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Subject: Council conclusions on Iraq

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Delegations will find attached the Council conclusions on Iraq, as adopted by the Foreign Affairs Council on 22 April 2013.

**COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS – IRAQ**

1. The EU recalls its commitment to develop a solid, long-term and mutually beneficial partnership with Iraq. This requires Iraq to build a stable political, judicial and economic environment, which will allow it to emerge as a secure, democratic, unified and prosperous country where human rights and the constitutional principles are respected and rule of law is adhered to. The EU is determined to stand alongside and support Iraq in these challenging times, and stresses the importance of increasing high-level contacts, building on the framework created by the EU-Iraq Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), and assessing progress made, including in the field of human rights.
2. The EU is concerned about the increased tension and the recently deteriorating human rights situation in Iraq and calls on all parties to refrain from the use of violence. It also calls on the Government of Iraq and all Iraq's political forces to engage in an inclusive and genuine dialogue to address grievances and resolve political differences within the framework of the Constitution, in order to allow all communities equal access to the political process and power-sharing. It is only through such a dialogue, founded on tolerance and mutual respect, that durable stability can be built. These are values that the EU endeavours to promote, in full respect of the sovereignty of its partners. For Iraq, they represent a way to counter the continuing unacceptable violence, safeguard the long-term stability of the country, enhance the human rights situation, respond to the aspirations of the Iraqi people, regardless of creed or ethnicity, and ultimately improve their livelihood. The EU calls again on Iraq to cease carrying out executions and to introduce a moratorium on the use of the death penalty.

3. The EU reiterates its continuing commitment to support Iraq's transition towards a sustainable democratic system, including through targeted assistance advancing good governance and the rule of law. The EU affirms the utmost importance of the independence of justice and penitentiary sectors to avoid any political use of them, of adequate police training, good governance and tackling corruption in support for the rule of law in Iraq. In this context, the EU affirms its commitment to a smooth and effective handover of the activities of the European Union Integrated Rule of Law Mission for Iraq, EUJUST LEX-Iraq, to other EU and international actors and to Iraqi authorities, ensuring that follow-up activity builds on lessons learnt and achievements accomplished by the mission.
4. The EU welcomes the holding of provincial elections on 20 April in a large part of Iraq, and congratulates the Iraqi people for having successfully expressed their democratic will. The elections are an important step towards a consolidation of the democratic system in which the Provincial Councils play an essential role, and it is unfortunate that the elections did not take place on 20 April in a number of provinces, including Anbar and Ninewa. It is important that provincial elections also be held in the remaining provinces of Iraq, without undue delay.
5. The EU recalls that inclusive economic growth is central to improving Iraq's stability over the long term. It looks forward to the implementation of the EU-Iraq PCA and encourages the Government of Iraq to take action to improve the services provided to the Iraqi population and create a business environment in Iraq that would allow trade to prosper.
6. The EU welcomes the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and the good offices of the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General. The EU strongly supports the Mission's efforts to advise and assist the Government of Iraq on strengthening democratic institutions based on free, fair and inclusive elections, facilitate regional dialogue, improve Iraq's capacity to provide essential services for all its people and residents and also to promote the protection of human rights and judicial and legal reform.

7. The EU considers that Iraq is a key partner with which to address regional conflicts. Our common objective should be to ease regional tensions and to cooperate on the resolution of crises such as the one currently unfolding in Syria. In this context, the EU calls on the Government of Iraq to allow entry to civilians fleeing violence in Syria. It also calls on the Iraqi government to do whatever is necessary to prevent any supply or transfer of arms to the Assad regime and its supporters in Syria. The EU wishes to work with Iraq and with all other willing partners to advance the conditions for peace and prosperity in the Middle East.
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