



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 10 February 2014

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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

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Subject: Council conclusions on Iraq

Delegations will find attached the Council conclusions on Iraq, as adopted by the Council on 10 February 2014.

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON IRAQ
Foreign Affairs Council, 10 February 2014

1. The EU reaffirms its commitment to assist Iraq in its transition to democracy, recalling that the unity and territorial integrity of Iraq are essential elements in building a secure and prosperous state for all its citizens and in bringing stability to the whole region. The EU is deeply concerned by the deteriorating security situation in Iraq, the increased terrorist threat facing the country and the marked increase in violence that have resulted in casualty figures not seen since 2008. The EU condemns in the strongest terms the latest series of bomb attacks in Iraq, including on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and expressed its condolences and sympathy to the families of the numerous victims.
2. The EU considers that internal political divisions and sectarian tensions have significantly contributed to the deterioration of the security situation inside Iraq, to which a security response alone cannot be sufficient. The EU renews its call on all of Iraq's political and religious leaders to engage in dialogue and to speak out against sectarianism and violence. It encourages the Government of Iraq to reinforce the rule of law and take decisive measures to promote inclusiveness and advance reconciliation, as Iraq's long term security and stability depend on an inclusive political process.
3. The EU is closely following the developments in Anbar province, including in the cities of Ramadi and Fallujah, and encourages the Government of Iraq to strengthen cooperation between its security forces and local Anbar tribes. The EU is deeply concerned by the large numbers of Internally Displaced Persons fleeing the conflict zones and emphasises the importance of protecting civilians. The EU also encourages efforts by the Government of Iraq to ensure the provision of essential services as well as access by humanitarian agencies to areas affected by the fighting.

4. The EU expresses its support to the Iraqi authorities in the fight against terrorism and is ready to cooperate with Iraq on a comprehensive response to this global threat that is compliant with human rights and international humanitarian law.
5. The EU recognises the negative repercussions of the Syrian conflict on security in Iraq, and reiterates its commitment to continue working with the Government of Iraq, which has a constructive role to play, and with others towards finding a political solution to the crisis. The EU commends Iraq for receiving civilians fleeing the violence in Syria and recalls the importance of maintaining an open borders policy. The EU offers its continuing support in bringing urgent humanitarian aid to the affected populations.
6. The EU welcomes the passing of amendments to Iraq's electoral law in November, which has paved the way for general elections due to take place on 30 April. The EU underlines the utmost importance of these elections for Iraq's continued democratic transition and calls on all actors to ensure that they are inclusive, transparent, credible and held on time. The EU welcomes Iraq's request for support to elections and is evaluating all possible options with a view to assisting Iraq.
7. The EU welcomes the good progress in the implementation of the EU-Iraq Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, including the successful holding of several expert-level meetings in October and November 2013 and of the first EU-Iraq Cooperation Council on 20 January 2014. The EU will continue to strengthen relations with Iraq and to advance cooperation in all fields of mutual interest, providing targeted assistance in jointly agreed areas. The EU will also continue to assist Iraq in promoting democracy, human rights, good governance and the rule of law, including by building on the experiences and achievements of the EUJUST LEX-Iraq mission.

8. The EU expresses its concern at the alarming rate of executions, reiterates its firm stance against the death penalty, and calls on the Iraqi authorities to introduce a moratorium.

 9. The EU supports the efforts of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and those of the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General to assist the Government of Iraq in strengthening its democratic institutions and processes, promoting the rule of law, facilitating regional dialogue, improving the provision of basic services and ensuring the protection of human rights.
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