



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



IRAQ - Council Conclusions - 31 January 2005

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The Council very much welcomes the holding of the Iraqi national elections, in which the great majority of electors voted. The level of participation in the elections, the first for more than fifty years, reflects the deep attachment of the Iraqi people to democracy and the rule of law. The Council pays tribute to the Iraqis, who have shown courage, enthusiasm and determination in taking part in the elections despite a difficult security situation. The elections are an important and successful stage in the process of democratic transition in Iraq. They represent the first steps taken by the Iraqi people on the road to democracy, freedom and peace, which will continue well beyond the transition period. The European Union reaffirms its commitment to support for the Iraqi people in this aim and stresses the importance of achieving maximum inclusiveness in this process.
2. The Council accordingly welcomes the endeavours of the Iraqi Independent Electoral Commission, its Iraqi staff, the local observers, the Iraqi interim government and the United Nations, who enabled the elections to be held within the time-limit laid down by Resolution 1546 of the UN Security Council, and notes the support given by the international community, including the European Union. The Council notes the importance of the continuing support of the European Union in the constitutional process and in the elections planned for December 2005. The Council reiterates the importance of full involvement of all sections of Iraqi society in that constitutional process.
3. The Council reaffirms its aim of a safe, stable, unified, prosperous and democratic Iraq cooperating constructively with its neighbours and with the international community to meet common challenges. It reiterates the European Union's commitment to contributing to the economic, social and political reconstruction of Iraq and its support for UN activities in Iraq. In order to attain this goal, it emphasises the European Union's intention to continue implementation of the full European Union assistance programme as presented in Iraq on 5 November 2004. The Council re-states its determination to support the Iraqi authorities and people, in particular in reinforcing the judicial system and encouraging respect for the rule of law.

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4. The Council attaches the greatest importance to the continuing implementation of the next stages laid down by Resolution 1546, in particular the formation of a transitional national assembly, whose tasks will include the formation of a transitional government for Iraq and the drafting of a permanent Constitution, resulting in the formation by 31 December 2005 at the latest of a government elected in conformity with that Constitution. The EU reaffirms its willingness to work with the Iraqi transitional government and the transitional National Assembly. If asked, it is ready to give its assistance with the constitutional process in accordance with Resolution 1546 and in full coordination with the UN.
5. The Council reiterates its firm condemnation of the terrorist attacks, intimidation and criminal violence against the Iraqi electors, election candidates and election workers; and of the hostage-takings and murders which have been committed in Iraq. It expresses its solidarity and its compassion for the families and friends of those who were victims of such acts. The Council deplores the fact that the campaign of terrorist violence in Iraq is prolonging the suffering of the Iraqi people and hampering political progress and reconstruction in Iraq. It is pleased that all parties are committed, under Resolution 1546, to abiding by international law, including as regards the effective safeguarding and promotion of human rights."

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