



EUROPEAN UNION

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## **EU and Iraq: signature of historic Partnership and Cooperation Agreement**

Brussels, 11 May 2012 - Catherine Ashton, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice President of the European Commission today signed the EU-Iraq Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the Foreign Minister of Iraq, His Excellency Hoshyar Zebari. This first ever framework agreement between the EU and Iraq establishes a comprehensive platform for enhancing ties and cooperation in a wide range of areas: from political matters such as countering terrorism and promoting human rights, to trade and investment in key areas such as energy and services.

Catherine Ashton said: *“I am delighted to sign an Agreement which I am convinced is good for Iraq, good for the EU, and good for our long term relationship. That is what the Agreement is all about: sealing our common wish to work together on a whole range of issues where we both have much to gain. This is the first ever such Agreement between the EU and Iraq.”* And she added: *“For me this agreement is above all a symbol of the EU’s wish to be a positive partner for Iraq in its democratic efforts. It is a fitting testament to the EU’s determination to build a long-term partnership, not just today or tomorrow, but for many years to come.”*

The EU-Iraq Partnership and Cooperation Agreement provides for regular political dialogue on bilateral, regional and global issues wherever the EU and Iraq have a shared interest in working together. It will improve and clarify the trade arrangements between Iraq and the EU, to promote vital investment and to help integrate Iraq into the international economy. It also sets out a framework for continuing cooperation in many areas, from health and education to environment and energy.

**P R E S S**

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FOR FURTHER DETAILS:

Michael Mann +32 498 999 780 - +32 2 299 97 80 - [Michael.Mann@eeas.europa.eu](mailto:Michael.Mann@eeas.europa.eu)

Maja Kocijancic +32 498 984 425 - +32 2 298 65 70 - [Maja.Kocijancic@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Maja.Kocijancic@ec.europa.eu)

Sebastien Brabant +32 460 75 09 98 - [Sebastien.Brabant@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Sebastien.Brabant@ec.europa.eu)

[COMM-SPP-HRVP-ASHTON@ec.europa.eu](mailto:COMM-SPP-HRVP-ASHTON@ec.europa.eu)

[www.eeas.europa.eu](http://www.eeas.europa.eu)

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The agreement contains provisions in areas such as combating terrorism, countering proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and promoting human rights.

The European Union is respecting its commitment to Iraq. This commitment is also reflected in more than €1 billion already contributed by the European Union towards the reconstruction of Iraq since 2003, with a focus on assisting the Iraqi people to access basic services, further democracy, and promote good governance.

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