



EUROPEAN UNION

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Remarks by High Representative Catherine Ashton following the signature of EU-Iraq Partnership & Cooperation Agreement

I am delighted to be here today with Foreign Minister Zebari, 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. Today, we can proudly say, is an historic and symbolic day in our relationship. We are opening a new chapter.

We commit ourselves today to work better and talk more often on political matters, including regular discussions on the key challenges in a crucial but troubled region.

These multiple challenges affect us both: from countering terrorism to promoting and protecting human rights.

We are also committed to boosting trade and investment between the EU and Iraq. Economics meets politics: increased trade and investment will be crucial to back the work on the political front to support Iraq's transformation into a stable and prosperous democratic nation.

Iraq is a young democracy, and the road ahead will not always be smooth. 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 brings together the EU and its Member States as 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.

Last but not least, I want to thank our Iraqi friends, EEAS and Commission staff, and Member State representatives for their hard work in bringing the negotiations for this important Agreement to a very successful conclusion.

P R E S S

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