



## **European Parliament**

**Permanent ad hoc Delegation for relations with  
Iraq**



## **Council of Representatives of Iraq**

**Delegation of the Women's, Childhood and  
Family Committee**

### **Joint Declaration**

**Brussels, 11 September 2008**

We, Members of the European Parliament ad hoc Delegation for relations with Iraq and the Women, Childhood and Family Committee of the Council of Representatives of Iraq, held our first Interparliamentary meeting in Brussels on 11 September 2008.

We are committed to a secure, stable, free, prosperous and democratic Iraq, playing its full part in the Community of Nations.

We recognize that a serious and lasting commitment by the international Community in general and the EU in particular is necessary to assist the efforts being made by the people of Iraq to build their future. We also recognise that, since 2005, the Republic of Iraq has held two multiparty elections, has adopted a constitution by referendum, has created the basis for a federal state and has embarked on a difficult process of building democratic institutions.

We therefore stress the importance of a regular dialogue, which affords an opportunity to achieve a better understanding on political, social and economic issues.

We agree to report back to our parent bodies on the content of our discussions, particularly in the areas where joint efforts are likely to result in positive outcomes. We examined a wide range of issues dealing with the concerns of Iraq, including national reconciliation, religious tolerance, rights of women, the economic situation, technical assistance, good governance, as well as the relations between central government and the regions.

We recognize that although Iraq suffered from sectarian conflict and insurgency, progress is currently being made, particularly if compared with the situation in 2006/2007. Both delegations take note that efforts to achieve capacity- and democracy-building, and efforts to fight corruption and ensure transparency and effectiveness are nonetheless fundamental preconditions for an increased role of the EU, which is negotiating an advanced Trade and Cooperation Agreement with Iraq.

We further decide to join our efforts to help Iraq build effective and strong parliamentary institutions, transparent and accountable, promoting the rule of law and ensuring democracy. We are particularly impressed, in this respect, by the active role played by Iraqi women, irrespective of confession, and by their crucial contribution in supporting democratic good governance and promoting political pluralism.

We therefore agree to continue work jointly to develop a programme aiming at political and administrative cooperation between our parliaments. We believe particularly that, by exchanging best parliamentary practices and historical experiences, MEPs can help their Iraqi colleagues. We further commit ourselves to provide the necessary democratic scrutiny of the cooperation which is undertaken by our respective governments by our joint work and by maintaining a regular pattern of Interparliamentary exchanges and meetings.

In this respect, we recall the European Parliament initiative, in the 2008 Budget, to promote support democracy-building with parliaments in third countries, and notably its commitment to support actively the Iraqi Council of Representatives by offering assistance for capacity-building and to assist the further development of the Iraqi Council of Representatives.

We therefore underline the possibilities existing in the EP "window" of the EU Visitors Programme and call Council of Representatives officials to participate to this programme - and are furthermore especially encouraged by the *Democracy Fellow* programme of the EP which allows mid-ranking officials and MPs to follow 6 to 12 weeks of traineeship at the European Parliament.



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