The Parliament of Iraq recently adopted a law that reinforces existing Iraqi laws criminalising relations with Israel. This is not in line with the recent positive regional trend with a number of Arab countries having normalised relations with Israel. The EU considers normalisation a fundamental step for the stabilisation of the region as a whole and recalls its longstanding position that a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict requires a regional inclusive approach and engagement with both parties. The EU, via its Delegation in Baghdad, has conveyed its strong concern on this matter to the Iraqi authorities.

EU development cooperation provides important support to strengthening the rule of law, democratic governance and civil society in Iraq in close and fruitful collaboration with the Iraqi authorities. These programmes play an important role in promoting democratic values and fundamental rights. The framework of EU development cooperation is notably provided in Financing Agreements. It is not intended at this stage to envisage the suspension of assistance due to the adoption of this specific piece of legislation, but the Commission will nevertheless keep the situation under review.

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2 The Commission may suspend the implementation of a Financing Agreement in the event the partner country breaches the Agreement’s general and/or specific conditions, or any obligation relating to respect for human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law or in cases of corruption or grave professional misconduct proven by any justified means.