



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 10 June 2004

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COVER NOTE

from: General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union
to: Middle East / Gulf Working Party
Subject: **Iraq**: EU Medium Term Strategy

Delegations will find attached copy of a letter by the Secretary General / High Representative of the Council of the European Union, Mr Javier Solana, and the Member of the European Commission, Mr Christopher Patten, addressed to the President of the Council of the European Union, Mr Brian Cowen.

The Commission Communication on this issue is set out in Doc. 10423/04 COMEM 13.

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COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

**THE SECRETARY GENERAL / HIGH REPRESENTATIVE
JAVIER SOLANA**

**MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION
CHRISTOPHER PATTEN**

Rue de la Loi 176, 1049 Bruxelles
Wetstraat 200, 1049 Brussel

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Wetstraat 200, 1049 Brussel

Brussels, 9 June 2004
D(2004) 10111

Dear President,

Subject: Iraq: EU Medium Term Strategy

The European Union is determined to help with the transformation of Iraq and has underlined many times its support for the reintegration of Iraq into the international community as a sovereign, independent and democratic country, at peace with itself and with its neighbours and with its territorial integrity preserved. Responding to the European Council's request, this letter and the Commission communication "The European Union and Iraq: A Framework for Progressive Engagement" make suggestions on how our interests and these aspirations could be turned into policy.

The adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1546 is welcome as it establishes the framework for Iraq's transition. The European Union will now have an opportunity to strengthen its involvement with Iraq. A sovereign and representative Iraqi government will be an important partner for the EU. Iraqi ownership of its own affairs is fundamental for any meaningful EU engagement. But the situation in Iraq remains complex. The EU has repeatedly called for a leading UN role in Iraq and we should continue to give this our full support. The political process is moving forward, but many questions still remain. Above all, the security situation is still a serious concern – and some forces may attempt to disrupt it further. Insecurity increases the difficulty of taking concrete action inside Iraq.

Any EU strategy will have to adapt to changing circumstances. As Iraqi authority and independence gradually evolve from an Interim Government in July, to an elected Transitional Government after the elections next January and ultimately a fully-fledged Iraqi Government based on a new constitution and new elections towards the end of 2005, the EU's involvement should also increase in a progressive manner. This will allow for actual progress in the transition to be taken into account.

We have been working jointly to develop an EU medium term strategy for relations with Iraq in line with these principles. The Commission communication defines the EU's fundamental interest in engaging with Iraq and proposes concrete steps for the short and medium term. This joint letter complements that work, setting out our common view of the EU's objectives and highlighting some issues for EU action.

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Mr Brian Cowen

President of the Council of the EU

We believe that the EU should target three main areas for action in Iraq:

- *Supporting the political process, including elections;*
- *Promoting security and stability in Iraq and the region;*
- *Engaging with Iraq to lay the foundations for longer-term relations.*

Initially, support for the political process should concentrate on elections; the elections to be held at the latest next January are a crucial element in the political transition process. The UN will have an important role in assisting the Iraqi Interim Government in this task. The EU should provide assistance for the preparation of elections to ensure that they are free, fair and meet international standards. Depending on the circumstances, consideration might also be given to an EU election observer mission.

The EU has an important role to play in providing political support for the process of transition. We should leave no doubt in the minds of the Iraqi people and the emerging political players that the EU supports the restoration of political power to Iraq and the Iraqis, with the UN in a leading role. This point should be made equally clear in our contacts with Iraq's neighbours and with other countries and organisations. We should also offer assistance in areas where we have experience, including technical expertise available in many EU Member States for the drafting of a new Iraqi constitution that guarantees respect for the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Elections will require an improvement in the security situation. It will be a major challenge to ensure that the security situation in Iraq not only allows the holding of elections, but also provides an atmosphere in which peaceful and moderate parties can make their voices heard. We should look into possible concrete action in this regard, including assistance in the field of police, building, for example, on police training currently organised by some Member States. We could also consider using the other EU civilian instruments for crisis management, in particular in the fields of rule of law and civilian administration, drawing on Member States' capabilities in these areas. If conditions permit, an exploratory mission could be sent to find out in what functional and geographic areas EU action would be most useful, taking account of the wishes of the Iraqi authorities.

Insecurity in Iraq also affects our own security. The EU and the Iraqi authorities need to pay particular attention to terrorism emanating from Iraq and the region.

After many decades of suspicion and hostility between the neighbours of the Gulf region, there may now be an opportunity to promote security and stability in this region. It is a strategic objective for the EU - as set out in our Security Strategy - to build security in our neighbourhood. This includes Iraq and its neighbours.

Promoting regional security needs a long-term vision; results will not be achieved over-night. The EU, based on its own experience in building regional stability and its good working relations with *all* the countries of the region, could have a special role to play, including sponsoring regional confidence-building measures and arrangements. With the aim of encouraging a discussion on security issues between the countries around the Gulf, we might begin by consulting the countries of the region individually. Ultimately, some form of ad-hoc group might be required to support efforts by the region.

The idea of an International Conference on Iraq has been raised. Such a conference would include all interested countries, building notably on the meetings of Neighbouring Countries. Its purpose would be to show unambiguously the full support of the international community for the transition process under way in Iraq, and thus to bolster the position of the Interim Government. In agreement with the Iraqi Interim Government, the EU should support and consider co-sponsoring such a conference.

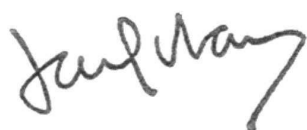
The EU has never had any formal relations with Iraq and, for the last decade, there has been little contact. This must now change; we should immediately start engaging with Iraq to lay the foundation for longer-term relations. The EU's Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East provides a regional framework both to develop EU-Iraq relations and to promote Iraq's re-integration in the region. We should increase contacts and exchange of visits with the Interim Government. A continuous political dialogue should be developed.

The issue of the EU's representation on the ground needs to be considered, with due account being taken of the security situation. We believe that there is scope for the Member States already present in Baghdad to increase their coordination and common work in order to foster, to the extent possible, a collective EU approach in contacts with the Iraqi administration and population. The Commission is establishing an office covering Iraq in Amman and, when conditions permit, this office could move to Baghdad. The appointment of an EU Special Representative, working closely with the Commission presence, could be considered.

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After many years of repression and conflict, the Iraqi people deserve a peaceful, well-governed and prosperous country. We believe it is in the EU's interest to help them achieve that. We would be grateful if you could draw the attention of EU Foreign Ministers to this letter and the Commission Communication. We look forward to discussing our ideas with you at the External Relations Council and the European Council.

Yours sincerely,



J. SOLANA



C. PATTEN