

European Union and Iraq: a framework for engagement

2004/2168(INI) - 06/07/2005 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative resolution drafted by Giorgos **DIMITRAKOPOULOS** (EPP-ED, EL) and called for a UN peace-keeping force in Iraq. (Please see the summary of 15/06/2005.) The resolution was adopted by 345 votes in favour, 109 against and 167 abstentions. Parliament said that the outbreak of the war in Iraq was an unfortunate substitute for a political solution aimed at fostering political change and democratisation in that country. However, it expressed the need to move on from past events and to look towards the future. Parliament was greatly concerned over the deteriorating security situation in Iraq since the end of combat operations was declared on 1 May 2003. It hoped that the lessons learned from the Iraq war would lead to more multilateral, democratic and results-oriented conflict management worldwide in the future.

The overall turnout of the first elections was a major achievement that showed the conviction of the Iraqi people to determine their own independent future by democratic means. Parliament noted that a large part of the Sunni minority did not participate in the elections and members of other minorities, such as Assyrians and Turkmens, were prevented from voting. Parliament called on the Iraqi authorities to guarantee the participation of these minorities in forthcoming elections. The new Constitution must recognise the ethnic, national, religious and property rights of the Assyrians as well as their right to play an integral part in the new Iraq.

Parliament said that EU reconstruction aid should be aimed at providing basic services such as primary healthcare, education, clean drinking water and proper sanitation and work actively with the Iraqi authorities in the fight against terrorism.

The EU should promote a new UN Security Council Resolution on Iraq with a view to assessing the situation, enhancing the stabilisation process and

-setting out guarantees for a greater commitment by, and a leading role for, the United Nations,

-providing for decision-making regarding the replacement of foreign troops in Iraq by a UN peace-keeping force, particularly since all political parties running for election asked for the withdrawal of foreign troops, and since some of the countries participating in the war have now withdrawn or decided to withdraw their troops, on the basis that any decision regarding the withdrawal of foreign troops is to be progressively implemented in accordance with a clear timetable,

-providing for consideration of the participation in training Iraqi armed forces and police forces by countries not taking part in the war.

Parliament moved on to urge protection of the fundamental rights of Iraq's largest group of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), the Marsh Arabs, whose treatment by the regime of Saddam Hussein was particularly brutal and tragic. There must be a long-term solution to the question of IDPs in southern Iraq, including the right to return to the land and water that the Marsh Arabs have farmed and fished for over 5000 years. In this context, Parliament supported the development in the new Iraq of human rights policies which have at their core the restitution of property illegally stolen by the previous regime.

Parliament insisted that any substantial contribution by the EU to the reconstruction of Iraq should not be to the detriment of assistance to other countries or regions. It expressed surprise that the funds allocated to

reconstruction are being partly administered by the World Bank Trust and not entirely by the United Nations. The fact that, to date, the World Bank Trust has only utilised a minute proportion of the funds set aside is a matter of concern.

Finally, Parliament stated that one of the essential conditions for the reconstruction and development of the Iraqi economy is for Iraqis to exercise full control over the country's natural resources and to use the revenue from the sale of petroleum in such a way as to ensure that it is reinvested in Iraq. Given the possibility of a significant Iraqi contribution to the Union's security of energy supply and the potential for the EU and Iraq to mutually benefit from increased Iraqi production of oil and natural gas, a level playing field for investment and regulatory convergence in the energy sector are factors of major interest to both the EU and Iraq.