



The EU and Iraq

The EU is a long-term partner of Iraq, cooperating in various areas such as humanitarian aid, stabilisation, reconstruction, human rights, migration, security and the political, social and economic reform agendas. EU-Iraq cooperation is based on the EU-Iraq Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) which was signed in 2012 and entered into force in August 2018.

Furthermore, in response to the specific challenges Iraq is facing following the territorial defeat of Da'esh, including ongoing humanitarian, stabilisation, early recovery, reform and reconciliation needs, the EU adopted on 22 January 2018 an [EU strategy for Iraq](#). The strategy and continued funding demonstrate the EU's steadfast commitment to support the Iraqi people and their government as they seek to tackle these key challenges.

Iraq has been suffering decades of violence and armed conflict, but the successful campaign to defeat Da'esh militarily, and the \$30 billion pledges of the international community at the Kuwait 'International Conference for the reconstruction of Iraq' has given hope for a peaceful future of the country. Iraq now stands at a political and economic cross-road. The EU alone pledged €400 million in grants funding at the Kuwait conference and is assisting the country in building its post-Da'esh future focussing on the needs of Iraqi citizens through inclusive governance and social cohesion. In this context, the EU has increased its diplomatic outreach to Iraq, and the additional funds under the EU strategy have been mobilised rapidly.

EU support in Iraq

Since 2014, the EU has provided over a billion euros in response to the crisis: €435.27 million in humanitarian aid; €320 million in development funding; €150.9 million from the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian crisis (EUTF); € 42.6 million in crisis response assistance from the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) and €6.5 million from the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) and civil society organisations. This financial assistance supports measures across a number of areas:

1) Political support

The European Union is deeply committed to continue working with the Iraqi government and population for the stabilisation and reconciliation of the country, supporting Iraq's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity. In its contacts with the Iraqi authorities, the EU emphasises the importance of tangible progress on political reforms and reconstruction.

With more than €46 million, the EU is supporting local and regional governments to develop their own local development plans and stronger and accountable governance for their citizens: from community based projects to nation-wide initiatives to break the cycle of sectarian violence.

Moreover, the EU has committed over €29 million for projects linked to conflict-resolution and reconciliation, ranging from conflict reduction between Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and host communities at local level through dialogue initiatives, to the support to investigations conducted through the International Commission on Missing Persons. The EU also supports informal dialogue efforts between Iraq and its neighbours.

2) Leading humanitarian efforts

The humanitarian context in Iraq is moving into a new phase. Although the war to retake territory from Da'esh ended in 2017, post-conflict dynamics still work throughout the country, with important humanitarian consequences. There are security, housing, economic and social welfare challenges that result in new or secondary displacement or prevent Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) from returning in the first place. At the same time, new sources of instability are emerging linked to rising poverty rates, lack of or slow reconciliation at community level, and political and social tensions.

The EU has [led the international humanitarian efforts](#) for the Iraq crisis, providing over €435 million of funding in the period 2014-2019, in order to respond to the humanitarian crisis in the country.

In 2018, the EU provided €40 million to Iraq in humanitarian aid and has allocated €30 million so far for 2019. The EU humanitarian aid focuses on the most vulnerable persons and will continue to assist displaced people unable to or prevented from returning to their areas of origin. This includes daily, lifesaving provision of protection support, water, shelter, food and emergency medical assistance. The EU also helps families deal with severe trauma through mental health services and rehabilitative care, contributing to reducing the human cost of war and to support the re-start of civilian and economic life. In parallel, the EU provided humanitarian assistance in detention centers with a specific focus on youth, indirectly facilitating a conducive environment for sustained de-radicalization. The detention of children in adult facilities or informal detention centers is of particular concern.

Facilitating the returns of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

As a result of the different layers of conflict and displacement and due to various obstacles to return and reintegration, an estimated 400,000 IDPs remain in 97 camps, more than half of whom in Nineve governorate; 1.3 million IDPs live outside camps; and another 4 million returnees live in return areas, mostly in Nineve and Anbar governorates, facing various challenges to re-establish their lives and livelihoods. In addition to IDPs, there are an

estimated 250,000 Syrian refugees living in Iraq, mostly in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

IDPs in protracted displacement, especially those in camps, continue to rely on humanitarian assistance while returnees face various challenges to re-establish their lives. Key humanitarian issues include retaliations against IDPs with perceived IS affiliation; ongoing ethnic and sectarian violence; and forced returns. It is therefore of paramount importance to continue support to protracted IDPs and to make sure that returns are supported in a safe, voluntary, informed and dignified manner, reducing conflicts within communities with the ultimate objective of achieving a stable and prosperous Iraq.

The EU pays particular attention to **child protection and education in emergencies**, offering also learning spaces and schools in and out of the camps for the over 3 million IDPs throughout the country.

All EU humanitarian aid is impartial and independent, delivered only on the basis of needs and putting respect for international humanitarian law and protection of civilians at the forefront.

3) Development cooperation and stabilisation of liberated areas

The recovery of all occupied Iraqi territories from the hands of Da'esh was a watershed moment. The EU has paid tribute to the courage of the people of Iraq, its government and the armed forces, and to the sacrifice in military and civilian lives that the Iraqi people have made to achieve this victory.

As development support spans most areas of EU engagement in Iraq, the EU worked in cooperation with the government and key partners on a variety of portfolios to deliver on its commitments. The EU's ongoing development cooperation portfolio in Iraq, now amounts to €320 million in areas including good governance, stabilisation, capacity building and provision of primary and secondary education, demining, early recovery and reconstruction efforts, as well as promotion of sustainable job creation. This includes support to the Revive of the Spirit of Mosul and Basrah initiatives which will provide jobs and livelihoods opportunities - in particular to youth - while reviving the ancient techniques for reconstruction of historical sites and houses. It will also serve a way to foster social cohesion and a sense of Iraqi identity, cultural heritage and unity. Assistance in this field also includes support to rural development, agribusinesses and value chains and the creation of rural livelihoods in liberated areas and other vulnerable parts of the country.

The EU also supports key socio-economic reforms in public finance management and the energy sector.

The continued swift and effective stabilisation of the areas liberated from Da'esh building on the successes achieved so far, is key to the safe, voluntary and dignified return of the remaining internally displaced, and is also essential for **reconciliation and for longer term stability in Iraq**, which is also supported by EU development funds for local development, border and migration management, livelihoods, education and sustainable job creation.

Demining and decontamination of liberated areas

Donor coordination for stabilisation purposes is essential. This is why **the EU leads the**

counter-Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) action of the Global Coalition to counter Da'esh, together with the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), and is one of the main donors when it comes to projects to decontaminate areas recovered from Da'esh alongside the Member States' contributions. Specifically, the EU Delegation in Iraq chairs the Global Coalition's sub-working group on explosive hazard mitigation, where the concept of a "blended approach" to decontamination was developed. Such an approach brings together all relevant actors involved in clearing IEDs, such as UNMAS, NGOs, contractors and the local and central Iraqi authorities. Efforts are also joined up for risk education campaigns for IDPs, humanitarian assistance and reconstruction efforts. Most importantly, the actors were brought together to share knowledge and develop a clearance standard that could be used to train more local actors.

The decontamination is already showing important results. In Ramadi alone, more than 6,000 students were able to return to their studies thanks to the clearance of the university. Another 2,000 people were able to return to the city's teaching hospital and resume their jobs. Nevertheless the needs remain enormous and the EU will be looking to step up its support in this area.

In 2018, the EU contributed an additional €10.8 million to UNMAS (the overall contribution for the period 2014-2018 stands at €40.4 million, in order to improve the safety of the population that remained in or is returning to areas liberated from Da'esh.

Through the EU Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian Crisis (EUTF), the EU supports demining and decontamination efforts in areas liberated from Da'esh in KRI and in the Nineve Governorate and around Sinjar. The latter will enable particularly the return of the Yezidi population. The EUTF is furthermore supporting a female Yezidi demining team in Sinjar through the Mine Advisory Group (MAG). Following the High Representative/Vice-President's pledge to 2018 Nobel prize laureate Nadia Murad, the EUTF is discussing a contribution of around €1 million to Nadia's Initiative and the Sinjar Action Fund, focusing on Iraqi Yezidis. This support would also be in line with the EU's broader commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment globally.

The EU further contributes substantially to the UNDP Funding Facility for Stabilisation to facilitate the voluntary, safe and dignified return of IDPs to the areas retaken from Da'esh. In addition to the support channeled through the Funding Facility for Stabilisation, the EU is contributing €48.5 million to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which will promote the stability and socio-economic development across the country.

Supporting early recovery and resilience of the local population

On top of funding job creation and local development to make sure that the population has increased income and livelihood opportunities, the EU contributes €150.9 million under the [EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis \(EUTF\)](#) for projects benefitting the Iraqi and Syrian refugee population.

The Trust Fund supports demining efforts, job creation for IDPs, refugees and host communities, rehabilitation of emergency maternal and child healthcare and selected irrigation infrastructure, provides access to higher education, mental health and psycho-social support, and increases health authority resilience and

capacities of the local administration to respond to the crisis. The EUTF also actively supports Peshmergas, injured while fighting Da'esh, regain their socio-economic self-reliance.

In order to make sure that all Iraqi children have equal access to quality education, the EU supports different programmes worth almost €36 million in this key area. Working in partnership with civil society organisations and local and central governments, particular emphasis is laid on inclusive education for vulnerable school-age children (6-17) including IDPs, refugees and children with disabilities.

4) Support in the security sector

Common Security and Defence Policy mission to support civilian security sector reform - EUAM Iraq

In response to a request from the Iraqi authorities for support in the civilian security sector reform area, and in line with the [Council conclusions on Iraq of 19 June 2017](#), a CSDP Mission - EUAM Iraq - was established by the Council in October 2017.

The Mission is focused on assisting the Iraqi authorities in the process of implementation of the National Security Strategy and provides strategic level advice to key nodes of the Ministry of Interior (MoI) in the framework of the Security Sector Reform Programme.

During the initial year of activity, EUAM established efficient working relations with their Iraqi counterparts and embedded advisers directly in the relevant services of the ministry of Interior and other institutions. In October 2018, Iraqi authorities confirmed their willingness to receive support from the EUAM on SSR and EU Member States decided to prolong the mandate of EUAM Iraq for 18 months until April 2020 while doubling the number of international experts deployed to the Mission (up to 70).

A new focus area in the second mandate relates to Border Management, where engagement is underway at the Border Point Commission (BPC) and at the Border Force Command within the Iraqi Ministry of Interior (MoI).

The strengthened presence and expanded scope in the second mandate now implies regular advising by the Mission to eight Directorates within the MoI. EUAM has been advising on the development and implementation of Iraqi national strategies, notably the Human Rights and Gender Strategy, National Counter Violent Extremism (CVE) Strategy, MoI five-year Strategic Plan (2019-2023), Civil Society Strategy, Organised Crime (OC) Strategy and Counter Terrorism Strategy. EUAM Iraq also maps the existing needs for potential further EU engagement in the security sector; and it supports the EU Delegation in the coordination of EU and MS assistance in the civilian Security Sector.

5) Counter-terrorism

The EU is actively supporting the improvement of Iraqi counter-terrorism efforts by helping the Iraqi authorities to develop a human-rights compliant Iraqi counter-terrorism strategy and improve their coordination capacity.

In order to improve information sharing and coordination mechanisms, the EU is working with the Iraqi law enforcement and intelligence services in line with the United Nations' needs assessment for Iraq.

At the same time, the EU is supporting programmes for **conflict reduction** and contributes €10 million to actions to break the cycle of sectarian violence.

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