



17/4/2003

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### **Presidency's Statement on Iraq, Athens 16/4/2003**

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The European Union welcomes the presence of the United Nations Secretary-General and the opportunity to discuss with him the next step on Iraq.

At this stage the coalition has the responsibility to ensure a secure environment, including for the provision of humanitarian assistance, in particular urgent medical relief, and the protection of the cultural heritage and museums.

The people of Iraq now have the chance to shape a new future for their country and to rejoin the International Community.

The International Community has a major contribution to make in that process, in particular:

- The UN must play a central role including in the process leading towards self-government for the Iraqi people, utilizing its unique capacity and experience in post-conflict nation building.
- Iraq's neighbours should support stability in Iraq and the region
- The EU reaffirms its commitment to play a significant role in the political and economic reconstruction of the country
- The EU welcomes the participation of the International Financial Institutions as set out in the recent statement by the G7 at the World Bank meeting in Washington.

The EU welcomes the appointment by the UN Secretary-General of a special adviser on Iraq and looks forward to a further strengthening of the UN's involvement in post-conflict Iraq, initially in the coordination of the humanitarian assistance.

As part of the process of regional security and stability the EU reaffirms its commitment to bring the Israeli/Palestinian peace process to a successful conclusion through the implementation of the steps foreseen in the Quartet's Roadmap, keeping within the established time lines.

It is essential that there is an early endorsement by Chairman Arafat and the Palestinian Legislative Council of a Cabinet, nominated by Abu Mazen and committed to reform.

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