

# EU/NR 91/05: EUROPEAN UNION BIGGEST DONOR FOR IRAQ'S ELECTIONS AND REFERENDUM

Benita Ferrero-Waldner

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European Union Biggest Donor for  
Iraq's Elections and Referendum

The European Commission will be providing €30 million for the preparation of forthcoming elections in

Iraq bringing the total made available from the Community Budget for Iraq's historic votes in 2005 to €80 million. This makes the Commission the major international donor to the elections and constitutional referendum, which are the milestones of the current political transition. International support for the elections and referendum have chiefly been supplied through the United Nations window of the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq, in line with the role assigned to the UN by UN Security Council Resolution 1546. The Commission financed 100% of the UN's requirements for preparation of the recent referendum and, together with Member States, will finance nearly two-thirds of the UN's budget for preparation of the two sets of elections.

Commissioner for

External Relations and  
European Neighbourhood  
Policy,

Benita Ferrero-Waldner,  
said: "The EU and the UN share a vision of a stable, prosperous, unified Iraq with a pluralist democracy where political differences will be settled by democratic dialogue and not violence. The EU has been the UN's key partner in this essential task."

She added: "The EU has made a priority of helping the UN to play its part in the political transition, because without these crucial steps and an inclusive political process, there can be no stable future in Iraq, and no meaningful reconstruction."

The EU was a driving force to ensure a central role for the UN in assisting the Iraqis in the political transition, and this was confirmed in due course by UNSC 1546. The Commission has since proved to be the major international donor supporting the UN's work:

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January elections: €31.5 million. The Commission supported the January elections with a wide spectrum of support ranging from Information Technology to voter outreach and media development including training programmes for journalists. Three experts were deployed to Baghdad to support the work of the UN Election Assistance Division. The Commission also ran a training programme for 170 Iraqi election observers.

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October referendum: €20 million. The Commission funded 100% of the UN's work in preparing the Constitutional referendum, ensuring that Iraqi voters in the Referendum were able to make informed choices. Voter outreach activities included hundreds of thousands of posters and pamphlets, public information films on TV and radio, as well as newspaper adverts. It is also due to Commission support that the Constitution was translated into four languages and millions of copies made available.

EU will continue its support of the political transition

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December elections: Another €30 million will be made available to fund the organization of the forthcoming elections. Commission support plus contributions from Member States make up 61% of international contributions to the elections held in 2005.

Commission support for the political transition will not stop when the elections are over. Our priority in 2006 will be helping the Iraqis build transparent and accountable institutions that work for the benefit of the Iraqis: that means a truly accountable Assembly, institutions that can guarantee the rule of law, financial institutions that citizens can trust, trade and energy departments that maximize the potential of the country's economic assets.

We will also be pursuing our political dialogue, which

was launched with the ministerial visit to Baghdad in the summer, in which Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner took part. This is important to help normalize relations between Iraq and the outside world.

Commission support for the political transition is part of the €518 million contributed towards the reconstruction of Iraq since the end of 2003. The Commission has proposed that the contribution from the Community budget for Iraq in 2006 should be €200 million. This is still to be approved by the budgetary authorities, but would bring our contribution from the community budget to €718 million since the fall of Saddam Hussein.

#### Other Activities

Aside from the political transition the Commission has targeted aid on meeting the daily needs of the Iraqi people through contributions to the health and education sectors, and the generation of jobs, primarily through the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq (IRFFI).

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#### Health

The Commission is the biggest donor in (IRFFI) on health issues. The Commission is contributing to:

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the boosting of immunization services, with the aim of attaining at least 90% immunization coverage across the country;

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training of over two thousand health personnel in a wide range of subjects – from health and human rights to primary health care systems;

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provision of material including forty ambulances, thirty-eight 4WD vehicles, three hundred motorcycles,

three hundred portable food safety kits, 1,086 oxygen cylinders daily for key health care facilities, nineteen mobile clinics, informatics equipment as well as emergency medical supplies;

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rehabilitation and construction of key health facilities including 272 primary health care facilities, nineteen training centres for continued education, the national drug quality control laboratory, seventeen mental health care facilities and twenty-one maternity wards.

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## Jobs

The Commission is contributing to:

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rural development activities such as the promotion of cottage industries and of community irrigation schemes;

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job creation and skill development: the Commission contributes to the Iraq Reconstruction and Employment programme (Commission 35%), which has already created 3.4 million working days for nearly 100,000 workers.

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## Education

The Commission is contributing to:

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strengthening of primary and intermediate level education through provision of teaching and learning

materials, for over fifteen thousand schools, furniture for three thousand primary schools and comprehensive rehabilitation of 150 schools;

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training of fifty thousand primary school teachers and thirty thousand secondary school teachers.

For more information:  
[http://europa.eu.int/comm/external\\_relations/iraq/intro/index.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/iraq/intro/index.htm).

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