

**Address
by Mr. Anton Niculescu
Secretary of State to the
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania**

*On the occasion of the 1st Annual Review Conference
Of the International Compact with Iraq
Stockholm, 29 May 2008*

**Mr. Chairman,
Dear Colleagues,**

- Allow me to extend to the Swedish Government my sincere thanks for the warm hospitality we have received here in Stockholm and for the excellent organization of this Meeting as well.

- On the other hand, I underline, from the outset that my country fully subscribes to the statement delivered by the Slovenian Presidency of the European Union. I wish to address, in my national capacity, some particular issues that strike at the very heart of Romania's approach to the Iraqi issue.

Mr. Chairman,

- A friend in need is a friend indeed. That is why my country welcomed the International Compact with Iraq from its very inception. We see it as a useful initiative and we work in order to have concrete results for the population and the authorities of Iraq. We are here today, at the first anniversary meeting of ICI, with the aim to give a clear signal of our resolute support to Iraq.

- Since the establishment of ICI, Romania concentrated its efforts on assistance in the field of institutional capacity building, by means of providing experts and organizing training programs with Iraqi public servants. In concrete terms, under the aegis of EUJUST LEX mission, in 2007 we trained 20 Iraqi policemen on public order management and human rights, whilst 2 specialists on penitentiary system joined the "work experience secondment" course. This year we ensured, with the financial support from the national Official Development Assistance, a training program for 15 Iraqi magistrates, while another program is to be developed next August for police experts.

- It is our will to continue along this line, meeting the objectives of ICI and thus helping our Iraqi friends.

Distinguished participants,

- It is no secret that Romania looks with great care and attention to the security situation in Iraq and is currently acting in order to contribute to its stabilization.

- In doing so, we share the view that the Iraqi authorities have made a great deal of progress in this respect. The Baghdad government is in direct control of an important number of Iraqi provinces and has given clear signals of developing the capacity to ensure the full control of its territory. Thus for the current year there are very good prospects in this sense.

- However, the Iraqi authorities still need the support of the international community in many ways. Alongside other countries, Romania contributes with troops on the ground, at the request of the Iraqi government. We act in order to help local authorities to assume full responsibilities in ensuring the security of their own country.

- Another form of support to Iraq comes, naturally, from the political dimension of the stabilization process. What is keenly needed now is to work for Iraq's presence in international affairs. Furthermore, we are of the view that the security of Iraq is related to the security of the whole Middle East. Therefore the role of Iraq's neighbours is of special importance.

- In this context Romania welcomes the decision of neighbouring countries to support the process of stabilization of Iraq, as recently shown in the meetings held in Bahrain (April 21st) and Kuwait (April 22nd). The Expanded Iraq Neighbours Meeting is certainly a significant mechanism in assisting Iraq to reintegrate in the Arab world and the international community. The next ministerial meeting to be held next fall in Baghdad in this format reflects neighbouring countries' confidence in the solidity of Iraq's domestic developments. In this line, we consider that the establishment of diplomatic representation between Iraq and these countries would be helpful.

- Last but not least, the issue of debt relief in favour of the current Iraqi authorities should be looked at carefully. As for Romania, we signed in 2005 an agreement to write off 80% of the Iraqi debt in accordance with the framework agreement concluded between the Paris Club of creditor nations and the Iraqi authorities. Romania was the first non *Paris Club* member to conclude such an agreement with Iraq. We think it would be useful for other creditor countries to adopt measures along the same line.

Mr. Chairman,
Dear friends,

- I would like to conclude by wishing the Iraqi authorities every success in their endeavours and to assure them that they can rely on our firm support. Romania is ready to contribute to the reconstruction efforts of the Iraqi authorities.