



United Nations Human Rights Council

First session

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High-Level Segment

Statement by

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on behalf of the European Union

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Mr. President of the Human Rights Council,
Mr. Secretary General,
Mr. President of the General Assembly,
Madam High Commissioner,
Excellencies,

At the General Assembly in September last year, many of us praised the Human Rights Council as one of the main achievements of the Millennium Review Summit.

Today I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union, the acceding countries and candidate countries at the first session of this body. On this occasion I would like to thank our tireless leader, Secretary General Kofi Annan as well as the President of the General Assembly, Foreign Minister Jan Eliasson. Both of them played a key role to establish this cornerstone of the ongoing UN reform. I would also like to thank the President of this Council, Ambassador Luis Alfonso De Alba, for his important contribution he has already made in putting the Council to work.

All along, the European Union has demonstrated its full commitment to the establishment of an effective Human Rights Council and we will continue to do so. Now, we have to seize this once in a lifetime opportunity to make a major step forward in improving the UN human rights system.

Berta von Suttner, a compatriot and the first woman to win the Noble Peace Price, said: "*There is only one honest way of protecting the*