



**Statement by
H.E. Mr. Jaroslav B a š t a
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of the Czech Republic**

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High-Level Segment

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Mr. President,

Madam High Commissioner,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, I should like to congratulate you, Mr. President, and other members of the Bureau on your election. The Czech Republic associates itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union by the Austrian Presidency. Let me briefly comment on the Czech Republic's priorities in the field of human rights.

The sixty-year history of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights has come to an end. Throughout this period, the Commission was no doubt the most important universal body dealing with the promotion and protection of human rights. It took part in shaping the modern system of human rights protection, including the international human rights treaties with their monitoring bodies or the Special Procedures. Despite many excellent results on the one hand, it has been increasingly criticized on the other hand, among others for excessive politicisation of its work. While aware of some of its shortcomings, the Czech Republic has always appreciated the major successes achieved by the Commission in the field of promotion and protection of human rights.

Let me mention one of these last achievements. In 2002, the Commission adopted the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The Protocol now enters into force, and I am sure that the two-pillar system of prevention of torture will make the global action against torture even more efficient.