



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL  
THE PRESIDENT**



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### **Opening remarks by President Herman Van Rompuy at the European Council**

This is our first meeting of the year: welcome! Today we must reach an agreement on our Union's budget for the rest of the decade. We're picking up from where we left matters last November.

The past weeks have been productive and I am confident that around this table we can now settle on a final compromise. We simply have to.

In all budget talks, understandably, there is a tendency to get absorbed in small riveting details and forget the bigger picture, even though it matters most. So before we dive deep into animated discussions let's all try to keep the bigger picture in mind.

We need a budget for the future, with a clear focus on growth, innovation, and creating jobs, especially for young people. We need a budget of moderation, taking into account difficult economic realities across Europe and providing value for money. And we need a budget for pressing concerns: fighting unemployment, supporting the efforts of those worst affected by the crisis in Europe and playing our role in tackling global risks.

Dear colleagues, I strongly believe that if we all show a sense of responsibility, then exactly such a budget for the European Union is within our reach. But we are not there yet, let's start working!

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# **P R E S S**

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