Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, the former Republic of Macedonia¹, Montenegro², Iceland² and Serbia⁰, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, and Armenia align themselves with this statement.

Transnational organized crime and corruption pose serious threats to the welfare of citizens and peace and security worldwide. They hamper policies aimed at sustainable development among communities and in society more generally in many different ways. Organized crime hinders legitimate economic activity and undermines democratic governance, the rule of law and security. We are seeing a growth in the links between transnational organised crime, corruption and international terrorism, in particular in certain fragile states where there is a clear governance vacuum. In addition to trafficking of established commodities such as drugs, criminal groups have expanded their activities to include cybercrime, maritime crime, and counterfeit products, including medicines which can wreak untold damage. Trafficking in persons is one of the most heinous manifestations of organized crime. Crimes are also committed in the smuggling of migrants. Environmental crime also underlines socioeconomic development of a number of developing countries.

¹ The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process

² Iceland continues to be a member of EFTA and the European Economic Area
Mr. Chairman,

The EU and its Member States believe that transnational crime, as a global phenomenon, needs to be tackled in a holistic and integrated manner at national, regional and international level. Cross-border threats can only be countered through effective judicial and law enforcement cooperation between States and regions. We take this opportunity to reaffirm the importance of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC) and its Protocols as an agreed set of principles, standards and rules in combating transnational organised crime. We welcome the increase in ratifications of these instruments and call on all the States to further promote their adherence and comprehensive and effective implementation. In that respect, the EU and its Member States support the proposal of a mechanism for the review of the implementation of UNTOC and its Protocols. This should assist us all in identifying improvements in the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols by the Parties. The mechanism should complement already existing international efforts such as that supported by the Council of Europe. We underline that such a review mechanism needs to be strong and effective, and should include the exchange of good practice as well as the participation of civil society in that review.

The UN Convention on Transnational Organised Crime plays an important role in providing assistance on extradition, mutual legal assistance and asset forfeiture. Technical assistance is of crucial importance in ensuring the effective implementation of the provisions of the Convention and Protocols thereto. The EU and its Member States provide financial support to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime in this regard and strongly support the work of the relevant UN bodies at the global level in these fields.

Since organised crime and criminal markets are transnational in essence, the EU has developed a strategic and operational approach aimed at enhancing law enforcement cooperation at EU level and with third countries and relevant partners in the framework of the EU policy cycle for organised and serious transnational crime 2014-2017. Nine priorities have been retained in the forthcoming policy cycle. Annual operational action plans are being implemented and monitored regularly. These priorities concern drug and firearms trafficking, irregular migration, cybercrime, property crime, counterfeit and sub-standard goods which are potentially dangerous to health and safety.

Firearms trafficking is a common denominator in serious and transnational organised crime, as well as terrorism, empowering criminals and increasing the danger to society. That is why the EU is preparing a strategy to better secure the licit trade, reduce diversion into criminal hands, improve law enforcement response and data collection and improve the security of citizens and businesses.

Mr Chairman,

Coherent crime prevention policies enhance the safety and security of all our citizens. The best way to reduce the level of crime is to take effective measures to prevent it from ever occurring.

We now recognise more than ever that promoting social inclusion and using a multidisciplinary approach (including appropriate administrative measures and promoting cooperation between administrative authorities) are essential elements of any crime prevention policy.
Mr Chairman,

Corruption poses a serious threat to the integrity of our governments, administration and societies. The EU and its Member States remain committed to further promote the ratification and implementation process of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). We believe that the review mechanism created in 2009 can be a useful tool to fight corruption. We call on all to enable participation of civil society in the reviews, to embrace field visits as essential for the effectiveness and efficiency of the reviews, to support a structural dialogue between civil society and the Implementation Review Group and, for obvious reasons of transparency, to publicize full country reports. We also support the work of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on the Prevention of Corruption which allows for the exchange of good practices.

Mr. Chairman,

Drug-related problems remain one of the major concerns of the citizens of the European Union. They pose a major threat to national and international security, and endanger the health of individuals, communities and societies. The EU reaffirms its commitment to respond to the global drug problem. We believe that an integrated, multidisciplinary, evidence-based, mutually reinforcing and balanced approach between drug demand and drug supply reduction is needed. This approach should furthermore be based on the principles of shared responsibility and proportionality, and should be in full conformity with the basic principles of the dignity of all those affected by the global drug problem, including dependent drug users and must fully respect of fundamental freedoms and human rights. A balanced and humane approach is particularly relevant in the context of HIV prevention. The EU reaffirms its commitment to reducing the transmission among people who take drugs by injection by 50 percent in 2015, taking into account the WHO, UNODC, UNAIDS Technical Guide for countries to set targets for universal access to HIV prevention, treatment and care for injecting drug users.

In December 2012, the European Union adopted the EU Drugs Strategy for the period 2013-2020. This Strategy provides the overarching political framework and priorities for EU drugs policy for the period 2013-2020. It builds on the lessons learned from the implementation of previous EU Drugs Strategies and associated Action Plans, while taking into account other relevant policy developments and actions at the EU and international level in the field of drugs.

We believe that the EU Drugs Strategy 2013-2020 – as well as the process of evaluation, assessment and consultation that informed its preparation – constitutes a valuable contribution to the regional and global discussion on the drugs phenomenon. In this respect, we look forward to sharing it with our international partners, including within the context of an efficient, inclusive and transparent preparatory process for the 2014 High-Level Review of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action.

The EU Drugs Strategy aims to protect and improve the wellbeing of society and of the individual, to protect public health, to offer a high level of security for the general public and to take a balanced, integrated and evidence-based approach to the drugs phenomenon. It is based on the fundamental principles of EU law and, in every regard, upholds the founding values of the European Union: respect for human dignity, liberty, democracy, equality,
solidarity, the rule of law and human rights. Furthermore, the Strategy respects fully the European Convention on Human Rights and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

The Strategy is based on international law, the three International Drug Control Conventions that provide the international legal framework for addressing the illicit drugs phenomenon and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. It also takes into account relevant UN political documents, including the UN Political Declaration and Action Plan on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, and the UN Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS.

Today's interconnected world requires an approach to internal security that recognises the necessity for international cooperation. In addition to the cooperation between the law-enforcement agencies of Member States and EU neighbours, the EU is building bilateral relationships or regional approaches with our partners in areas of mutual interest and concern. We are, for instance, holding high-level dialogues on security and law enforcement that discuss the issues on the agenda of the committee today.

Mr. Chairman,

The EU has developed, in complementarity with the national strategies of the EU Member States, the EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human beings 2012 - 2016. It provides a coherent framework for existing and planned priorities and favours an integrated, multidisciplinary approach to address trafficking in human beings. The EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator, appointed in March 2011 by the European Commission, gives overall strategic policy orientation, also in relation to third countries, and oversees the implementation of this Strategy.

We are committed to address trafficking in persons in a victim-centred and holistic way. Our approach therefore places the victim and its human rights at the centre of its action to work towards eradication of trafficking in human beings, taking into account gender aspects and the best interest of the child. The May 2013 High-level Meeting on the Appraisal of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking provided a forum to appraise the progress achieved in the implementation of the existing instruments as well as to exchange best practices in the prevention and prosecution of human trafficking and the protection of victims. Our focus should be now on impact of our actions.

Mr. Chairman,

Piracy continues to be a threat to the security of important international maritime routes and international trade. This is a complex issue, which requires a comprehensive approach and a range of effective instruments. We appreciate the concrete results of the UNODC Counter-Piracy Programme. These activities form a substantial part of the overall efforts of the international community to address the threat of piracy and they enjoy the full and active support of the EU and its Member States. The long-standing engagement of the EU in the fight against piracy in the Western Indian Ocean is also evident through its naval operation EUNAVFOR Atalanta. We underline the crucial importance of combating money laundering also in the context of addressing the threat of piracy.

We note that the threat of piracy and other maritime crimes in West Africa is growing and that local efforts to tackle this threat deserve coordinated international support. In this respect, the
EU launched a new initiative to support seven African countries to enhance security and increase the safety of maritime routes in the Gulf of Guinea.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, may I reiterate our full support for the UN's pivotal role in the development of effective strategies and measures in fighting transnational crime in all its forms and for the full respect and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in that context.

Thank you.