Mr. President,

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

The Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia* and Albania*, as well as Armenia, align themselves with this statement. We reaffirm our unwavering support for the work of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals. We praise both Tribunals for their achievements and invaluable contributions to our shared goal of ending impunity for serious international crimes. We welcome the fact that the Mechanism is now operating on two continents and performing functions inherited from both the ICTR and the ICTY. We thank President Meron and President Joensen for their reports, and commend them for their efforts in completing the work of the Tribunals. We also pay special tribute to the work of all the staff of the Tribunals and the Mechanism. It is important that both Tribunals and the Mechanism get the support necessary to complete their mandates.

* The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
The Tribunals have played a key role in strengthening the Rule of Law and promoting long-term stability and reconciliation. Since their establishment, both Tribunals have embodied the need to fight impunity and the refusal by the international community to let the perpetrators of the most serious crimes of international concern escape justice. They were forerunners in creating jurisprudence in their field. They paved the way for the ICC.

Both Tribunals have continued to hand over responsibilities to the Mechanism, and we welcome the fact that the staff of the three institutions have worked together closely, and shared institutional knowledge, expertise and lessons learned. Such a smooth transition process is important in order for both branches of the Mechanism to carry on and protect the work of the Tribunals. We finally note with satisfaction that both Tribunals are committed to completing their proceedings in an efficient and timely manner, without compromising fair trial rights.

We recall that States’ responsibility to cooperate with the Tribunals and the Mechanism remains crucial for their ability to complete their mandates, in particular cooperation in bringing those indicted to justice. With respect to the ICTR, we recall that despite continuing appeals by the international community, nine accused individuals remain at large. The failure to arrest these fugitives is a matter of grave concern. We note with appreciation that the Office of the Prosecutor of the Mechanism focuses, among other tasks, on the tracking of the remaining fugitives indicted by the ICTR, and that the Prosecutor continues to receive support from Interpol and some UN Member States, including through the United States’ "War Crimes Rewards Programme". We call upon all States concerned to intensify their efforts and cooperation with the Arusha Branch of the Mechanism in order to achieve the arrest and surrender of all remaining fugitives. Enhanced cooperation of UN Member States on the issue of relocation is also needed in order for the Tribunal to be successful in implementing its Strategic Plan for Relocation prior to its closure. On 8 November, the ICTR will mark twenty years since its creation by the UN Security Council, and at the same time there will be approximately one year until the projected closure of the Tribunal: the support of the international community is necessary for the completion of ICTR’s mandate.

With regard to the ICTY, we note that at the closure of the reporting period, less than ten trials and appeals are pending, and that there were no outstanding indictments for violations of core statutory crimes. We note that in the ICTY report, the Office of the Prosecutor acknowledges the assistance it received from the European Union and the EU member States, and we will continue to support the Office of the Prosecutor. We welcome the fact the Office of the Prosecutor continued to provide information on the ongoing ICTY cases to assist national jurisdictions in prosecuting crimes arising out of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, and that the joint European Union/ICTY 'liaison prosecutors' project remained a central component of the OTP's strategy in this regard. We also note that the states concerned remain committed to meeting their obligations towards justice. Completing the process of rendering justice for crimes committed during the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia is an essential contribution to lasting reconciliation. Full cooperation with the ICTY remains
therefore an essential condition for the Stabilization and Association Process in the Western Balkans and is an essential condition for membership of the EU.

We welcome the work of the Tribunals and the Mechanism on strengthening the capacity of national authorities to handle the remaining war crimes cases effectively. We fully support the training and information exchanges as well as the access to publicly available investigating material and evidence from the Tribunals. This is important for the Tribunal's legacy and for the domestic capacity to adjudicate war crimes. In its Stabilization and Association Process for the Western Balkans, the EU is increasingly underlining the importance of local ownership for handling war crimes cases in line with the need to fight impunity.

We note that the Office of the Prosecutor continued to promote improved regional cooperation between States of the Former Yugoslavia in judicial matters, and we welcome the signature of the Protocol on the exchange of information and evidence in war crimes cases adopted between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro on 29 April 2014. However, many challenges remain in coordinating the activities of judicial institutions in parts of the region, and we note the serious concerns expressed by the Office of the Prosecutor in the parts of the report addressing national war crimes prosecution: we note the recent increase in staff numbers in the Prosecutor's Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which should advance the implementation of the National War Crimes Strategy in the upcoming period.

We note that the Arusha Branch of the Office of the Prosecutor continued to monitor progress in cases transferred to national jurisdictions, and that substantial progress has been achieved in certain proceedings.

We continue to urge all States to cooperate with both Tribunals and Branches of the Mechanism, in full compliance with their obligations under the relevant UNSC resolutions.

Finally, we welcome the steps taken by the Tribunals and the Mechanism in terms of capacity-building, dissemination of information and legacy. We recall the importance of the preservation of archives in the transition process with the Mechanism as they remain an integral part of the history and the memory of both Rwanda and countries of Former Yugoslavia. We will continue to support both the principle and system of international criminal justice and its essential role in the reconciliation process, and we call on all States to do the same. It is indeed important that knowledge gained and lessons learned in the fight against impunity are not forgotten.

I thank you.