Mr President,

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

The Candidate Countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro* and Serbia*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

Mr President, we want to confirm here our commitment to LDCs and LLDCs and our determination to continue to work together to deepen our partnership.

**We remain committed to the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action.** With LDCs in the lead and in full partnership with them, we will continue to step up our efforts, both in policy and financial terms. Our development policy and aid will be increasingly focused on countries which need it most and where it has the greatest impact. We will continue to accompany LDCs in their structural reforms to enhance productive capacity and unlock domestic potential for sustainable and inclusive growth. And we stand ready to promote this also through trilateral cooperation with other Southern partners. We will continue to provide LDCs with increasingly focused Aid for Trade. LDCs will also continue to benefit from duty-free quota-free market access to the EU market for all their products.

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* The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
except arms and ammunition under the EU’s reformed Global Scheme of Preferences (GSP), which will enter into force in January 2014. The EU’s new GSP scheme focuses on countries most in need, thus creating considerably more space for LDC exports. The EU will also pursue its efforts with a view to achieving progress on the Doha Development Agenda in time for the 9th WTO Ministerial Conference in Bali in December, including with a focus on LDCs.

We are determined to accompany LDCs in reaching the ambitious objectives they have set for themselves in Istanbul notably for half of them to meet the criteria for graduation by 2020. Last year, we confirmed our strong, transparent and predictable engagement to accompany LDCs in their national transition strategies to graduate from the LDC category, and encouraged other partners to do the same. We strongly reaffirm this commitment today. But we underline that predictability is also needed from the United Nation decision making process to ensure expeditious and time-framed action by the General Assembly on graduating countries, to conclude the work of ECOSOC. In this regard, we look forward to the General Assembly to quickly take action on the elements contained in the agreed ad ref resolution A/67/L.31/Rev.1 which was not adopted during the previous session.

We will also engage constructively in the preparation of the United Nation Comprehensive Ten-Year Review Conference, aiming at assessing progress made in the implementation of the Almaty Program of Action (APoA). We look forward to fruitful discussions to ensure focused and efficient preparation so as to concentrate efforts on key bottle necks, including high transport and commercial transaction costs, transit, or the potential of trade.

Mr President,

As stressed in the Outcome Document of the 25th September 2013 Special Event to follow up efforts towards achieving the MDGs, whether for the final push towards the MDGs in the run up to 2015 or when charting the way forward post 2015, we acknowledge the particular situation and concerns of the most vulnerable countries and need collectively to ensure that they are properly reflected in our work.

Finally, we are also looking forward to a fruitful cooperation with the Office of the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Islands Developing States (UN-OHRLLS).

Thank you