Madam and Mr. Coordinator,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, the Republic of North Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia* and Albania* as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

I would like to start by commending Colombia and France for their continued strong commitment as Co-coordinators to improve international cooperation and coordination on matters relating to Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) within the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW).

The EU remains fully committed to reducing the suffering and the harm caused by mines, booby-traps, and other devices in accordance with the provisions of Amended Protocol II and we invite all States who have not yet done so to join this important instrument of International Humanitarian Law (IHL).

We are deeply concerned about the continued severe global impact of IED attacks and their indiscriminate use and effects in particular in the perpetration of terrorist acts. Efforts to step up clearance are important given the humanitarian impact of IEDs and their overall negative consequences for the security, stability and development of fragile States.

* The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
**Multilateral work to counter IEDs**

We reiterate our support for the relevant UN General Assembly Resolutions and the 2016 political declaration on IEDs within Amended Protocol II which have helped to build global awareness of the wide-ranging aspects of the IED threat and the importance of a comprehensive approach. We recall the recommendations by the UN Secretary-General in his reports A/71/187 on enhancing prevention, preparedness and response, as well as A/73/156 on countering the threat posed by IEDs. We welcome the ongoing efforts towards a strengthened and coherent UN inter-agency coordination which is essential to ensure a whole-of-system approach, as also highlighted in the UN Secretary-General’s Agenda for Disarmament.

We encourage the High Contracting Parties to actively contribute to the CCW Questionnaire on Improvised Explosive Devices and to the existing guidelines, best practices and other recommendations aiming at addressing the diversion or illicit use of materials that can be used for IEDs. We support further involvement of industry in the exchange of information on national measures, best practices, and lessons learned. We welcome the information hub established by the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) which offers a useful compilation of resources for further work.

Furthermore, the EU welcomes the work conducted by the UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) on the development of a voluntary self-assessment tool. Containing a comprehensive overview of key regulations and policies that can help prevent the proliferation of IEDs and their components, this tool could assist States in identifying gaps and challenges in their national regulation and preparedness regarding IEDs. In that regard, the EU welcomes the informal expert meeting organized by UNIDIR with the support of France on 7 August 2019. Bringing together a wide variety of experts, this meeting was the occasion to discuss how regulations and policy can best support the prevention of the spread of IEDs and IED components, as well as to share knowledge, facilitate dialogue and evaluate UNIDIR’s proposed approach to the development of the voluntary self-assessment tool. The EU encourages any States that might step forward to pilot the voluntary self-assessment tool once it is completed.
EU Regulation on the marketing and use of explosives precursors

As set out in UN Security Council Resolution 2370 (2017), we call upon all States to adopt and implement more stringent national measures to prevent the supply of weapons and explosives precursors to terrorists. The EU has already undertaken a number of concrete actions in this regard, in accordance with the European Agenda on Security and more specifically in the EU Action Plan against the Illicit Trafficking and Use of Firearms and Explosives.

The purpose of the EU-wide harmonized rules and closer cooperation between EU institutions, EU Member States and other relevant stakeholders such as industry and Europol, is to reduce the risk that chemical substances are used for the illicit manufacture of explosives. Homemade explosives were used in the vast majority of IED attacks in the EU, including in Paris, Brussels, Manchester and Parsons Green. It is against this background that on 17 April 2018, the European Commission adopted a proposal for a new Regulation on the marketing and use of explosives precursors, amending Annex XVII to the Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 and repealing Regulation (EU) No 98/2013.

I am pleased to announce that on 1 August 2019, the new Regulation (EU) 2019/1148 on explosives precursors entered into force. It will apply from 1 February 2021 onwards. The new Regulation includes several measures to strengthen the existing rules. Firstly, it will expand the scope of the earlier Regulation by adding new substances to the list of restricted explosives precursors. Secondly, current registration regimes would discontinue, as registration has proved to be weaker from a security perspective than licensing or a ban for members of the general public. Thirdly, it introduces more comprehensive procedures and criteria for issuing licenses which include verifying the legitimacy of the request, security screening and a criminal record check. In addition, these measures should facilitate greater awareness raising and information sharing along the supply chain. Lastly, they will make clear that the restrictions also apply to online sales. Online marketplaces will also be obliged to detect and report suspicious transactions. The European Commission is developing practical guidelines to help EU Member States, the chemical industry and online marketplaces to implement the new Regulation.

Let me also note that EU customs is the gatekeeper for the passage of goods across the EU external border and remains committed to playing an active role in the appropriate control of explosives precursors at import and export.
International cooperation and assistance by the EU

As far as international cooperation and assistance is concerned, the EU will continue to support national capacity building efforts to address the IED threat. The EU is actively involved in particular in Iraq where we support the work of the Iraqi authorities, the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and several operators to mitigate the threat posed by IEDs. Furthermore, the EU Delegation in Iraq continues to chair a dedicated Explosive Hazards Management donors meeting. As part of the counter-terrorism cooperation with countries in the Mediterranean, the EU, through the European Gendarmerie Force and experts from EU Member States, supported Tunisia in providing three training cycles between May 2017 and June 2018 to the Tunisian National Guard, aiming at reinforcing its capacity to face the strong local IED threat. Such support focused on awareness raising on different types of IEDs as well as on a response to potential IED incidents.

Thank you, Madam and Mr. Coordinator