Mr Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its Member States. The candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Bosnia and Herzegovina\(^1\) and Georgia, as well as the EFTA country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

Mr Chair, in this statement, I would like to address a few issues under agenda item 2, on the future of the Implementation Review Mechanism (IRM), and item 4, on the implementation of the UNCAC. Let me start, however, by thanking the Secretariat for the excellent organisation and preparation of the meeting and the hard work that has gone into the background papers.

The EU remains deeply concerned by the ramifications of humanitarian crises and ongoing conflicts in different parts of the world. The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, which we condemn in the strongest possible terms, seriously hinders our efforts to foster the effective implementation of the Convention, in particular in the areas of international cooperation and performance of the IRM.

Concerning the future of the IRM, we were very disappointed that, at the 10\(^{th}\) session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention in Atlanta, some member states blocked any progress on Phase 2 of the Mechanism for short-sighted political reasons. The only thing we could agree upon was the extension of the IRM to June 2026. However, if we don’t start discussions on the modalities of the next Phase soon, there is a real risk that CoSP11 in 2025 will not be able to agree on these modalities.

---

\(^1\) North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
and on the launch of Phase 2. In that case, the vast expertise and human resources gathered by UNODC over the last 15 years face the very real risk of getting lost.

It seems obvious that the next Phase should include a follow-up on the implementation of recommendations made during the first Phase. But there are also very good reasons why it should not necessarily be limited to that. Changes in the national anti-corruption framework may have happened even where the review was relatively recent, and these changes may have rendered recommendations irrelevant – or conversely even more pressing. All of this needs time to discuss.

Moreover, we believe that we need to discuss whether the 2nd Phase should assess the effective implementation of the Convention, rather than just legislative compliance (as in the OECD Working Group on Bribery; FATF, GRECO; and to the extent that such a review of effective implementation has not already been performed by them). We believe that the transparency of the country reports needs to be enhanced. And we are convinced that we should make even greater use of the contributions that NGOs, academia and investigative journalists provide to the fight against corruption, bribery, money laundering and other Convention offences.

Let me now turn to the review of the EU.

The review of the EU under the 1st cycle is nearing its completion. In November last year, we hosted the on-site visit in Brussels. The review team met with colleagues from all relevant EU institutions and services, as well as with civil society. We once again thank the experts from the peer reviewers, Czechia and Niue, and the UNODC Secretariat for their commitment to this process, and are confident that the review can be finalised very soon, hopefully by the next meeting of the IRG in September.

We look forward to sharing some of the successes and good practices, as well as the challenges, highlighted by the reviewers once the final report will have been approved.

Let me now turn to Item 4: State of implementation of the UNCAC

In May last year, the European Commission adopted a package of new anti-corruption measures. The anti-corruption package includes a Commission proposal for a directive to combat corruption by means of criminal law and a joint Communication (by the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for foreign affairs and security policy), proposing to establish a sanctions regime for serious acts of corruption committed outside the EU. It also provided for the creation of an EU Network against corruption, which was established in September 2023, and whose key task, among others, will be to support an EU-wide corruption risk-mapping, to inform the future EU anti-corruption strategy.

The anti-corruption package, once adopted, would consolidate the existing framework composed of different EU anti-corruption legal texts, actions, and programmes. Importantly, it would oblige EU Member States to criminalise several non-mandatory
UNCAC offences. It also contains a new money laundering offence entitled “Enrichment from corruption offences” that would make self-laundering a mandatory offence where the predicate offence is corruption. This was inspired by Art. 20 of the Convention, illicit enrichment.

At the moment, negotiations with the EU Member States are ongoing, and the adoption of the directive is expected for 2025. The EU Member States would then have a deadline to transpose it into their national legislation.

Thank you, Mr Chair.