Mr. Chairman,

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

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

We recognise the role of the United Nations in furthering discussions on responsible state behaviour in cyberspace. We believe that the United Nations can help to strengthen cooperation and promote additional common understanding on State behaviour in cyberspace.

However, the EU and its Member States are not in a position to support the current draft resolution L.27 entitled "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security", tabled by the Russian Federation on 12 October 2018. We note with regret that the traditional sponsor of the ICT Resolution, the Russian Federation, has chosen to pursue a different course of action this year, with regard to both the process and the content of the previous First Committee resolutions that have enjoyed consensus until now. While we note that the resolution tabled by the Russian Federation has been revised, we still have serious reservations given that the text:

*The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
i) supports the assertion that cyberspace is ungoverned and undermines the universally agreed position that existing international law applies in cyberspace;

ii) weakens our joint commitments to the agreed norms of responsible state behavior and opens them up to challenge;

iii) places undue prominence on the sovereignty of states with the inevitable risk of weakening protection of online freedoms by increasing the ability of states to control access to and content of domestic internet use.

By referring selectively and without consensus to the recommendations of previous consensus reports of GGE, it also prejudges the substantive outcomes of any working group and consultative process.

Previous United Nations Group of Governmental Experts reports have articulated a consensus-based set of norms and recommendations, which the General Assembly has repeatedly endorsed, and called upon states to be guided by these recommendations in their use of ICTs. The EU and its Member States believe it is important that we build on this legacy.

We believe that another GGE can add value in advancing the international community's common understanding on how existing international law should be applied in cyberspace. A GGE with a clear, focused mandate would allow for in-depth discussions that should bridge differences in interpretation of the application of existing norms and build greater understanding of how these norms should be implemented. This would be a much needed expert input to a broad, all-encompassing discussion in an Open-Ended Working Group. All UN Member States should be able to contribute to this process and this is why the EU has significantly invested in capacity building in the area of cybersecurity and cybercrime, promoting national regulatory and legal frameworks in conformity with existing international standards. Furthermore, the EU considers the aspect of involving the UN membership as well as other relevant stakeholders, an important element of the GGE's mandate. A sixth GGE should hold regular, open-ended, inter-sessional consultations with the wider UN membership and interested stakeholders.
We also recognize the role an Open Ended Working Group can play in disseminating knowledge, in building expertise, and in fostering understanding of fundamental rules and their application to the states' behaviour in cyber space. The EU and its Member States will actively participate in good faith.

The EU and its Member States reaffirm their commitment to improving and strengthening stability in cyberspace. Looking ahead, we need to ensure a coordinated process to guarantee that we work and strive towards coherence. Therefore the EU and its Member States will continue to engage constructively in all UN cyber-related discussions with the aim of facilitating effective and complementary discussions which lead to concrete actions to set the standards for responsible state behavior in cyberspace.

–

Thank you, Mr Chairman