

Mr/ Madam Chair

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

The Candidate Countries Montenegro , Serbia , Albania , Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Georgia align themselves with this statement.

Turning now to counter-terrorism, let me start by saying that the threat from terrorism and violent extremism continues to pose a major challenge in a geopolitical strategic environment that is already impacted by multiple tensions and growing instability. Terrorist and violent extremist groups benefit from this fragile political and socioeconomic landscape, exploiting security and governance vacuums whenever they appear. We must enhance our measures and strengthen our cooperation to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism, while reaffirming our fundamental values and principles, in compliance with international law, in particular international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

The most prominent terrorist threats still come from al-jam'at al-Islamiyya and its affiliates such as al-Shabaab. The territorial expansion of terrorist groups in several regions in Africa is a particular cause for concern. We are ready to step up cooperation with our African partners, not only at a political level but also at an operational level, through financial and technical support.

In Afghanistan, recent attacks claimed by the Taliban and the threat posed by the enduring presence of al-Qaida remind us that we need to continue our efforts to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a safe haven for terrorists. It is important though, that measures to counter terrorism are not misused to target legitimate humanitarian actors, civil society or human rights defenders.

At the same time, it is vital to maintain our commitment to combat terrorism and the threat posed by al-jam'at al-Islamiyya and its affiliates in the region.

The European Union and its Member States also recognize the increasing threat from right-wing violent extremism and terrorism, which is a serious global challenge. We call for strengthening of the international engagement in the fight against both right-wing and left-wing violent extremism and terrorism.

Regarding the work of the Sixth Committee, and more specifically on the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism that is being discussed in the Working Group, let me make a couple of remarks.

We strongly believe in a rules-based system and we remain committed to the development of an additional international legal instrument such as the Comprehensive Convention. We agree with the Chair of the Working Group of the 76th Session that

The *EU Directive on combating terrorism*