Mr. Chairman,

I have the honor to take the floor on behalf of the European Union and its member states. The Acceding country Croatia*, as well as the Candidate Countries former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro**, Iceland** and Serbia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Georgia align themselves with this declaration.

The EU welcomes the organization of the Meeting of Experts which gives us the opportunity to discuss further the implementation of International Humanitarian Law with regard to Mines Other Than Anti-Personnel Mines, as decided at the Fourth Review Conference of the CCW last November.

We also take the opportunity to thank you Mr. Chairman for your commitment and for having presented to us your Food for Thought Paper as a useful basis for our discussion. It lends itself to prepare the ground for result oriented approach to our meeting. We would hope that the expert meeting could prepare if not substantive at least procedural recommendations to all the issues raised in the paper concerning the humanitarian aspects. We assure you and your team of our full cooperation in your endeavors.

We are not starting from a blank page, we discussed this issue in 2006 and as recently as last November the UN Secretary General called on us to address the humanitarian impact on civilians of MOTAPM. For the EU the humanitarian, developmental and economic concerns posed by the irresponsible use of MOTAPM remain important issues and should continue to be addressed. It is also important to strike a balance between humanitarian concerns and military considerations. We acknowledge that MOTAPM can still be used as legitimate weapons. It is also important to enhance the relevance of the CCW to International Humanitarian Law.

Mr. Chairman,

During the next few days we will have the opportunity to exchange views and to listen to interesting contributions addressing the humanitarian impact of use of MOTAPM. In our view, these discussions which highlight our concerns and broaden our knowledge are beneficial to our endeavors and we wish to see them to be continued. Mr. Chairman, we assure you that we are ready to assist you and to contribute constructively to the further progress of our work.

Thank you.

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1 *Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
2 **Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.