**Follow-up to the European Parliament non-legislative resolution on the
EU candidate status of Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia**

1. **Resolution tabled pursuant to Rules 132(2) and (4) of the European Parliament’s Rules of procedure**
2. **Reference number:** 2022/2716 (RSP) / RC9-0331/2022 / P9\_TA(2022)0249
3. **Date of adoption of the resolution:** 23 June 2022
4. **Competent Parliamentary Committee:** N/A
5. **Brief analysis/ assessment of the resolution and requests made in it:**

The resolution adopted by the European Parliament welcomes the membership applications of Ukraine, Republic of Moldova (hereinafter Moldova) and Georgia and is supportive of the countries’ aspirations to become EU members. The resolution calls on the Member States to grant EU candidate status to Ukraine and Moldova and to do the same for Georgia after the country fulfils the conditions outlined in the relevant Commission’s Opinion. The document stresses that such decision would reinforce the European Union’s role as a geopolitical actor and would send a clear signal on the EU’s stance in the context of Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine.

The resolution calls for the revival of the EU enlargement process and to maintain the commitments towards the Western Balkans with more dynamism. It also recalls that the EU enlargement process remains merit-based and requires the implementation of relevant reforms and of the EU *acquis*.

The resolution calls upon the European Commission and the Member States to consider additional resources necessary to prepare their internal structure and provide technical assistance to Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia. It also calls for an update of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) policy in order for it to remain a meaningful instrument in the current context and stresses the need for regional cooperation between the EaP countries.

Finally, the resolution calls upon the European Commission and the Council to establish an enhanced structured political dialogue with the three countries to advance their gradual inclusion in the EU institutions’ work. It also states that the prospect of full EU membership for those countries that wish to become EU members is in the EU’s own interest.

1. **Response to requests and overview of action taken, or intended to be taken, by the Commission:**

On 23 June 2022, the European Council recognised the European perspective of Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia and stated that the future of those countries and their citizens lies within the European Union. It also decided to grant the status of candidate country to Ukraine and to Moldova and invited the Commission to report to the Council on the fulfilment of the conditions specified in the Commission’s Opinions on the respective membership applications as part of its regular enlargement package. The Council will decide on further steps once all these conditions are fully met. Regarding Georgia, the European Council expressed readiness to consider granting the status of candidate country once priorities specified in the Commission’s Opinion on Georgia’s membership are addressed. It recalled that the accession process will depend on successfully meeting the Copenhagen criteria and taking into consideration the EU’s capacity to absorb new members *(paragraphs 3 and 7).*

All three countries have demonstrated strong political will to advance with the European path having started the necessary preparations to comply with the Opinions. The Commission is in regular contact with the authorities of the three countries to provide guidance for implementing the priorities and steps identified in the Opinions *(paragraph 8)*.

The Opinion on **Ukraine** defines seven priority reform areas to be addressed by the Ukrainian Government. Ukraine has shown its commitment to the swift fulfilment of the steps outlined in the Opinion by immediately relaunching legislation and key reforms in the rule of law sector. Several meetings took place already in July 2022 with the Commission to discuss concrete elements related to judiciary reform, fight against corruption, anti-money laundering, media law and national minorities. In this process, close cooperation with the Venice Commission and the Council of Europe is foreseen in the fields of national minorities’ and media legislation, Constitutional Court reform and anti-corruption - *inter alia* for the implementation of an Anti-Oligarch law - to ensure the best possible results in fulfilling the steps.

Ukraine has also prepared an Action Plan for the implementation of the recommendation on compliance with the Financial Action Task Force regarding the anti-money laundering legislation. The appointment at the end of July 2022 of the Head of the Specialised Anti-Corruption Prosecutor’s Office (SAPO), the launch of the selection for the Head of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU) and the new High Council of Justice members of high integrity have been important steps in implementing the Commission’s Opinion on Ukraine’s application for membership of the EU. In the margins of the EU-Ukraine Association Council on 5 September 2022, Ukraine signed three agreements associating itself with European programmes - the Digital Europe Programme, the EU Customs programme and the EU Fiscalis *(paragraph 13)*.

In the case of **Moldova**, the Opinion outlined nine priorities. These include delivering comprehensive justice reform and fighting against corruption, implementing commitments on “de-oligarchisation”, bringing anti-money laundering legislation in compliance with the Financial Action Task Force standards, improving the institutional capacity to deliver on reforms, enhancing civil society participation in the decision-making process and strengthening the protection of human rights. Action related to the Electoral Code will require the close involvement of the OSCE/ODIHR (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe/ Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights) and the Venice Commission. Swiftly after the decision of the European Council, the Moldovan authorities adopted an Action Plan containing a set of concrete actions for each priority, listing the relevant authorities in charge of the implementation, and setting the respective deadlines *(paragraph 8)*.

For **Georgia**, the Opinion presented twelve priorities, which include the depolarisation of the political system, public administration reform, reform of the judicial sector (including the integration of the European Court of Human Rights case law), fighting against corruption, vested interests and organised crime, strengthening pluralism and media transparency, enhance the protection of human rights specifically towards women and vulnerable groups, ensuring that the nominated Ombudsperson is independent and that its nomination is transparent and ensure a better involvement of civil society *(paragraph 8)*.

The Parliament of Georgia adopted an Action Plan to address these priorities. This plan, endorsed by the government, proposes to set up parliamentary working groups to discuss the way forward under each priority. At the same time, some opposition parties as well as civil society organisations have presented parallel plans and working modalities to address the said priorities. The EU has consistently called for cross-party cooperation and inclusive reforms.

The Commission’s financial assistance aims to enable the three countries to address their priority reform areas through the mobilisation of all the instruments at its disposal, including TAIEX and Twinning. For Ukraine, the Commission proposed in its Communication of 18 May to create a separate Reconstruction Facility and Platform for the reconstruction and recovery of the country

The Commission will present an analytical report of each of the three countries’ capacity to comply with the obligations of EU membership (*acquis* chapters) before the end of 2022. Furthermore, it will report on the progress towards fulfilling the recommendations specified in the Commission’s Opinions as part of the 2023 Enlargement package.

Russia’s unprovoked and unjustified aggression against Ukraine, and the European Council’s decision to grant a European perspective to Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia have fundamentally altered the geopolitical context in the region. However, this new reality only makes regional cooperation and the EU’s engagement in the region all the more important. The agenda of recovery, resilience and reform endorsed by Leaders at the **Eastern Partnership Summit** in December 2021 remains largely relevant. At the same time, the focus and the practical functioning of the multilateral EaP framework will have to be aligned and adjusted to the new context *(paragraph 12)*.

Regarding the **Western Balkans**, the first Intergovernmental Conferences (IGCs) opening the accession negotiations process with Albania and North Macedonia took place on 19 July 2022, following the approval by the Council of the respective Negotiating Frameworks. This marks the beginning of a new phase in the accession process for Albania and North Macedonia. It sends an important signal for the Western Balkans and beyond. The Western Balkans remain a geopolitical priority for the EU. The Commission is committed to the speeding up of the accession negotiations process for Albania, North Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro. In that spirit, immediately after the first IGCs with Albania and North Macedonia, the Commission has started the screening exercise with both countries, which is the first step in the negotiating process *(paragraph 5).*