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'I/A' ITEM NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee/Council
No. prev. doc.:	13201/22
Subject:	Joint statement of the EU, the Contracting Parties of the Transport Community Treaty, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia on the closer association of the latter three in the work of the Transport Community - Authorisation to negotiate an non-binding instrument

1. On 5 October 2022, the Commission services submitted to the Council an information note on the above subject.¹ Previously, the Commission had prepared a concept note outlining the political, legal and some budgetary aspects of the closer association of the Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia to the Transport Community.²
2. Following the application for EU membership submitted by Ukraine, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova, the European Council of 23-24 June 2022 recognised their European perspective and granted Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova candidate status³. In line with this decision, the EU has taken steps to pursue a closer association with Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia. This includes improving cooperation in the area of transport, with the aim to enhance connectivity and closer transport market integration.

¹ See ST 13201/22.

² See ST 12515/22.

³ See EUCO 24/22.

3. At its meetings on 23 and 27 September and 13 October 2022 the working party on transport – intermodal questions and networks discussed the new approach and its implications for the EU, the region, the Transport Community secretariat and the three countries. Delegations welcomed the aim of a closer association of the three countries to the Transport Community and requested more precise information about the part of the EU budget which could be used for its support. Several delegations asked the Commission to report on how the six partners of the Transport Community will position themselves in this process. Others recalled the recent G7 Statement on Ukraine, which referred to the preparation of important reconstruction efforts. DK entered a parliamentary scrutiny reservation.
4. To prepare politically a more systematic involvement of the three countries into the Transport Community, the working party agreed with the Commission that a joint statement between the EU, the six regional parties of the Transport Community and the three countries should be envisaged, which could be endorsed in the margins of the Transport Community's Ministerial Council meeting scheduled for 15 November in Brussels. Such a statement would:
 - underline the need to establish and maintain a continuous working relationship between Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia and the Transport Community, with the objective of improving cooperation in the field of transport;
 - call for the more systematic involvement of the associated partners in the Transport Community relevant bodies, including, but not limited to the Regional Steering Committee, the technical committees, the Social Forum and the Budget Committee;
 - invite the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat to reflect on the necessary adaptations of the working modalities of the relevant TCT bodies, in order to facilitate the more systematic participation of the associated partners;
 - stress the importance of this closer cooperation which may, in a second step, eventually lead to full membership of Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia in the Transport Community.
5. It is understood that the Commission will revert to the Council at the end of the negotiation to seek authorisation for the endorsement on behalf of the Union of the joint statement.
6. In view of the above, the Permanent Representatives Committee is invited to recommend to the Council to authorise the Commission to enter into negotiations on a non-binding joint statement to be endorsed on behalf of the EU, following the guidance laid down in point 4.