**Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine**

**On Establishing Enhanced Cooperation on European Integration – the “Association Trio”**

The Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine (hereinafter the «Participants»):

Taking into account the European choice, European aspirations and European identity of their nations,

Welcoming each other’s intentions to achieve membership in the European Union,

Adhering fully to the values on which the European Union is founded,

Taking into account close historical relationship and progressively closer links between the European Union, its Member States and their countries, as well as their desire to strengthen and widen relations in an ambitious and innovative way,

Underlining the sovereign right of our nations to determine their own future,

Having established political association and economic integration with the EU through the Association Agreements,

Recognizing strategic importance of the Eastern Partnership and remaining committed to its further development,

Have come to the following understanding:

**PARAGRAPH 1**

**PURPOSE**

The Participants agree to establish the “Association Trio” as a format of enhanced cooperation and dialogue among the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of three EU Associated Partners, as well as with the European Union on matters of common interest related to the European integration of their countries, including cooperation within the Eastern Partnership.

The Participants express the aspirations of the “Association Trio” countries towards the membership of the European Union and reaffirm their commitments to further progress in the implementation of the Association Agreements with the EU, which, however, do not constitute the final goal of their relations with the EU.

In this context, they recall that pursuant to Article 49 TEU, as European states, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine have a European perspective and may apply to become a member of the European Union, provided that all necessary criteria for membership are adhered to.

**PARAGRAPH 2**

**SCOPE**

In accordance with the common interests of their European integration, the Participants will cooperate to enhance their political association and economic integration with the EU, as provided by the respective Association Agreements, and promoting new opportunities within the Eastern Partnership.

The Participants believe that the significant potential of further development of their states’ integration with the EU requires that the tools and areas of cooperation correspond to the needs and capabilities of the “Association Trio”, providing them with more opportunities of enhanced political dialogue, as well as greater economic and sectoral integration.

The Participants are confident that the process of their European integration will further benefit from the incentive-based approach (“more for more”) aimed to set progressive benchmarks of the integration process and provide for tangible achievements for their societies.

The Participants’ contribution to the cooperation within the Eastern Partnership will be without prejudice to their bilateral cooperation with the EU in line with their European aspirations.

The Participants underline the importance of EU support to the Partners’ sovereignty and territorial integrity within their internationally recognized borders, as well as to strengthening their resilience and countering the security challenges. The Participants will continue working towards strengthening the EU’s role in advancing peaceful resolution of conflicts within relevant formats and platforms.

Taking into account ambitious and complex European-oriented reform agenda of the “Association Trio” states, the Participants recognize the crucial role of the EU assistance, in particular through dedicated financial instruments, corresponding to the level of their commitments and goals and in line with the principle of conditionality in relation to the progress in reforms.

Being guided by the goal of deepening their European integration process as well as willing to ensure further strategic development of the Eastern Partnership the Participants agreed to promote jointly in the dialogue with the EU institutions and EU Members States the following objectives:

•    Expanding the agenda of the dialogues between European Commission and “Association Trio”, in addition to the DCFTA-related issues, to new thematic areas for enhanced cooperation, such as transport, energy, digital transformation, green economy, justice and home affairs, strategic communications, healthcare;

•    Looking beyond DCFTA framework and elaborating additional tools to facilitate  and speed up integration of the “Association Trio” into the EU Internal Market;

•    Enhancing security and defence cooperation with the EU with the special focus on countering hybrid threats, strengthening cyber resilience, developing cooperation platforms with the EU Hybrid Fusion Cell and EU Cyber Security Agency, participation in CSDP missions and operations as well as participation in the EU Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) projects;

•    Promoting further engagement of the “Association Trio” in the EU framework programs and agencies;

•    Supporting mobilization of the EU robust assistance to uphold complex reforms by the “Association Trio” and ensuring their access to alternative funds and resources at EU’s disposal, including for implementation of the projects of common interest;

•    Coordinating joint efforts within the Eastern Partnership, based on European aspirations and common needs of the Association Trio.

**PARAGRAPH 3**

**MODALITIES OF COOPERATION**

For the purposes of the present Memorandum, the Participants agree to strengthen their cooperation by following means:

•    conducting regular and/or ad-hoc trilateral consultations to review ongoing developments or discuss specific issues in the framework of their integration with the EU, as well as cooperation within the Eastern Partnership;

•    establishing the “Association Trio” coordinators within the Ministries of Foreign Affairs;

•    holding the “Association Trio” coordination meetings on expert, senior officials and, when appropriate, ministerial levels ahead of important events of the Eastern Partnership agenda, with particular focus on high-level events;

•    undertaking joint diplomatic demarches to the EU institutions and the EU Member States on the jointly agreed issues related to their European aspirations, common initiatives of their European integration, as well as cooperation within the Eastern Partnership;

•    conducting coordinated public communication on the common approaches related to the European aspirations of the “Association Trio” and cooperation within the Eastern Partnership, including expert events and publications;

•    developing new dialogue platforms with regional initiatives involving the EU Member States, aimed at mobilization of support to the Trio’s European aspirations;

•    considering other forms of cooperation in view of new developments, needs and strategic goals stemming from progress in the Trio Partners integration with the EU.

**PARAGRAPH 4**

**DATE OF EFFECT AND DURATION**

This MOU will take effect upon signature. Any Participant to this MoU may cease its participation at any time by giving written notice to the other Participants. In such a case the MoU shall cease to be applied in its regard 1 month from the date the notification has been sent to other Participants. This MoU is also subject to possible revisions at the request of any participant.

Signed in three copies in English on May 17th, 2021.

**David ZALKALIANI**

**Vice Prime Minister,**

**Minister**

**of Foreign Affairs**

**of Georgia**

**Aureliu CIOCOI**

**Acting Prime Minister, Minister**

**of Foreign Affairs and European Integration**

**of the Republic of Moldova**

**Dmytro KULEBA**

**Minister**

**for Foreign Affairs**

**of Ukraine**