

Brussels, 24 June 2022

**Enlarging Europe for a better Europe****Let's celebrate the new candidates and let's not forget the others!**

ALDA is happy to celebrate the granted status of candidate country to the European Union, to Moldova and Ukraine. Since more than a decade our organization has accompanied the democratic transition and efforts of these countries. We worked with our members, both local authorities and civil society. Despite the difficulties of those terrible days, it is a great sign to show them that there is hope, together with the EU.

ALDA has supported the Eastern Partnership countries and their communities through actions and political engagement of its members. In Ukraine, we took a strong stand against the Russian aggression, and we continue working to support local democracy and local communities. In particular, we are asking to support the Local Democracy Agencies in [Dnipro](#) and [Mariupol](#) and [we are calling for more in the country](#). We definitely think that the candidate status to both Moldova and Ukraine will lead to support reforms that will be of benefit to the citizens. We aim at working again and more with local governments, empowered and engaged with civil society and we pay a tribute to the mayors and local elected leaders in Ukraine, everyday engaged in fighting and surviving.

We also support the European aspirations of our Georgian members and partners, and our Local Democracy Agency in Kutaisi, and we hope that the final agreement could come soon.

In those days which are enlightening a dark path for Eastern Europe, [ALDA confirms the importance of having Western Balkans countries fully integrated in the EU](#). For local governments and local civil society, the European perspectives offer a way out for peace, development, and stability. We can't underestimate the threat that the war in Ukraine, but not only, has on the communities in Western Balkan countries. In the past 20 years, ALDA has accompanied the peace building process and then supported the [enlargement through programme](#)s initiatives and the [Local Democracy Agencies](#).

Let's celebrate Moldova and Ukraine today but let's not forget Georgia and above all, the countries and communities from Western Balkans which deserves to move along with the integration process.

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[Statements of ALDA on Ukraine and Russia](#) and about [Bulgaria blocking the enlargement](#)