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CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

CDENF(2023)18FINAL

13 June 2023

## Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF)

**Opinion by the Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF) on PACE Recommendation 2253(2023) on “Deportations and forcible transfers of Ukrainian children and other civilians to Russian Federation or to Ukrainian territories temporarily occupied: create conditions for their safe return, stop these crimes and punish the perpetrators”**

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1. Following the adoption, during the 2nd part of its 2023<sup>th</sup> Session (Strasbourg, 24-28 April 2023), of [Recommendation 2253\(2023\)](#) on “Deportations and forcible transfers of Ukrainian children and other civilians to Russian Federation or to Ukrainian territories temporarily occupied: create conditions for their safe return, stop these crimes and punish the perpetrators” by the Parliamentary Assembly (PACE), the Committee of Ministers agreed, at its [1466th meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies on 9 – 12 May 2023](#) “to transmit it to the Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF), [...] for information and possible comments by 16 June 2023”.

2. The Bureau of the CDENF examined the Recommendation during an online meeting on 30 May 2023. Due to time constraints, and in order to expedite procedure on decisions requested by the Committee of Ministers, the Bureau had recourse to the tacit approval of all the members of the Committee through electronic communication, following the procedure set out in Article 13 b) of Appendix 1 to Resolution CM/Res(2021)3.

3. The CDENF welcomes the PACE’s support for the declaration on the situation of children of Ukraine, prepared by CDENF and adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe at their 4th Summit as Appendix II of the [“Reykjavik Declaration – United around our values”](#).

4. As regards initiatives to establish accountability for violations of international law, including international human rights law and international humanitarian law, in the context of Russian Federation’s aggression against Ukraine, the CDENF wishes to recall the need to pay full attention to violations committed against children, as expressed in the strongest terms in the Summit’s Declaration on the situation of the children of Ukraine.

5. The CDENF agrees with the PACE’s call “to ensure effective protection of migrants and refugees in a vulnerable situation, especially women and children fleeing Ukraine”. The CDENF considers important to reference the [Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child \(2022-2027\)](#) and especially its Strategic Objective on “Children’s rights in crisis and emergency situations”. The Strategy proposes a comprehensive set of actions building on the strong Council of Europe acquis in this area, including “supporting member States in building strong child protection systems able to adjust to a crisis” and “developing capacities and tools to support member States in protecting children in armed conflicts and in reintegrating and rehabilitating children returning from conflict zones.”

6. With regard to PACE’s expectation that the Secretary General will “ensure co-ordination of all actions taken to protect the rights of children of Ukraine” and the recommendation that “appropriate communication mechanisms are established, in co-operation with the Ukrainian authorities, as well as other international organisations”, the CDENF recalls its mandate to “facilitate regular exchanges of knowledge, good practices and experiences among member States in the areas covered by the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child” as well as to “ensure co-operation and synergies with relevant UN bodies, notably the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, as well as with the European Union and other relevant international organisations and civil society”. Under these terms of reference, the CDENF has held thematic exchanges on the situation of children of Ukraine, together with its participants and observers representing international organisations and civil society. The CDENF hereby confirms its readiness to provide guidance and support for the work of the mechanism to be set up according to point 3 of the “Declaration on the situation of the children of Ukraine” contained in Appendix II of the Summit Declaration.