



Consultation Group on the Children of Ukraine (CGU)

11th PLENARY MEETING

23 September 2026 / online

Summary Note

Executive Summary:

- The Council of Europe Consultation Group on the Children of Ukraine (CGU) held its 11th Plenary Meeting online on 23 September 2026. The meeting combined initial thematic stocktaking discussion on the transition out of Temporary Protection and children's transition into adulthood with a participatory co-creation exercise to inform the CGU's priorities for 2027 and beyond.
- The morning exchange brought together perspectives from Ukraine, host States, European and international organisations and child-protection actors. It highlighted differences in national residence and support arrangements, the particular risks arising when young people reach adulthood, and the need for early, individualised and coordinated transition planning.
- The afternoon's exercise, facilitated by Sage+Spark, enabled CGU members to review existing workstreams, identify six areas requiring continued or increased attention and consider practical avenues for future action. Voting highlighted three prominent priorities: support for the transition to adulthood; greater support for vulnerable groups; and support for children returned from deportation or forced transfer, including those affected by militarisation and indoctrination.
- Throughout the meeting, participants emphasised the CGU's value as a multidisciplinary platform for sharing national experience, identifying cross-border protection gaps and developing practical, child-rights-based responses in cooperation with Ukraine and other member States.

Overview of the Plenary Discussions

1. Transition from Temporary Protection and into Adulthood: Initial Stocktaking Discussion

An update on the extension of Temporary Protection until 4 March 2028 was provided, along with information on the new eligibility criterion applicable to newly arriving displaced people from Ukraine. CGU members shared updates on their national Temporary Protection arrangements and relevant initiatives on transitioning from Temporary Protection and children transitioning into adulthood. Some member states have started to develop transition plans for when Temporary Protection ends, with different member states being at different stages of the process.

Discussions highlighted that in most member states children of Ukraine benefit from Temporary Protection, while in some, unaccompanied and separated children from Ukraine live under different legal arrangements. In member states where children benefit from Temporary Protection, they generally retain this status when reaching the legal age of adulthood. It was mentioned that a growing number of Temporary Protection holders are considering changing their legal status, yet existing transition pathways are used rather infrequently. The low uptake was attributed to beneficiaries' own uncertainty about their future, necessary income thresholds not being met, and administrative burdens.

Many member states have not yet developed transition plans for the end of Temporary Protection or specific safeguards for vulnerable people, including children. It was noted that many emerging transition frameworks are grounded in employment or income-based criteria, which may be difficult to meet for children upon after they have reached adulthood or vulnerable caregivers, and that single parents with caregiving responsibilities may be disproportionately affected by income thresholds.

Participants highlighted that the transition into adulthood may coincide for many young people with the transition from Temporary Protection to another residence permit and questions on where to build their future. Children may face decisions about continuing their education or vocational training or entering employment at a time when they may also lose guardian support. The need to plan the transition into adulthood individually and coordinate across social welfare, education, healthcare, and migration authorities was underlined. Examples of good practice were shared on ensuring continuity of support and a gradual pathway to independence for young adults.

The general availability of information for children through websites and hotlines was noted, while individualised counselling was mentioned less frequently. Survey data presented during the session underscored that many Temporary Protection holders report a lack of complete information on accessible transition pathways. Good practices shared included using platforms already popular among young Ukrainians, collaborating with trusted intermediaries through social media, and multi-purpose contact points offering integrated practical advice.

Overall, it was emphasised that transitions between legal statuses should be anticipated and carefully managed, coordinated, and planned well in advance, with no gaps in the protection of children's rights, and that each child's situation should be assessed individually.

2. Co-creation of CGU Priorities for 2027 and Beyond

The second part of the meeting focused on shaping the CGU's priorities for 2027 and beyond. Through a facilitated consultation, members reviewed the relevance of current workstreams in light of evolving protection challenges and considered where the CGU's multidisciplinary membership, links with Ukrainian authorities and capacity to facilitate cooperation among member States could bring particular added value. The discussion sought to connect emerging needs with feasible, complementary and results-oriented avenues for future engagement.

Six areas warranting further attention emerged: support for young people transitioning into adulthood, including guardianship and meaningful participation; inclusion and integration, notably the prevention of bullying and peer violence; recovery and reintegration of children returned following deportation or forced transfer, including those affected by militarisation and indoctrination; strengthened responses to children in vulnerable situations, particularly children with disabilities and those requiring specialised care; protection challenges arising from cross-border movement and access to temporary protection; and access to reliable information to support informed decisions on voluntary return. Most of these areas could be pursued through existing CGU workstreams, while cross-border mobility was identified as a possible additional focus.

Building on the CGU's ongoing workstreams, members explored opportunities to consolidate existing achievements and translate them into more targeted, practical responses. Particular emphasis was placed on strengthening support for young people transitioning into adulthood, drawing on the CGU's work related to education, trauma-informed care and child participation, promoting inclusive educational environments and addressing peer violence and bullying, and advancing recovery and reintegration measures for children affected by unlawful deportation, forced transfer, militarisation and indoctrination. Members also highlighted the importance of building on the Advisory Group's work on children with disabilities to address broader protection gaps affecting children in vulnerable situations, as well as strengthening cross-border cooperation and access to reliable information on residence pathways and voluntary return. Targeted study visits were identified as a complementary means of facilitating peer learning and the exchange of promising practices, with a view to informing practical measures at national level.

In considering where the CGU could make the most meaningful contribution, members gave particular prominence to three interconnected areas: ensuring continuity of protection and support during the transition to adulthood, strengthening tailored responses for children in vulnerable situations, and supporting the recovery and reintegration of children affected by deportation, forced transfer, militarisation and indoctrination. These areas were identified as directions for further consideration, rather than formally adopted additions to the CGU's programme of work.

Key Takeaways and Ways Forward

The 11th Plenary Meeting reaffirmed the CGU's role in identifying emerging protection challenges and promoting coordinated, child-rights-based responses across Council of Europe member states. Discussions underscored the need to anticipate protection gaps linked to changes in legal status and the transition to adulthood, ensuring continuity of support through stronger multidisciplinary cooperation.

The co-creation exercise provided an opportunity to reflect on the CGU's evolving priorities and identify areas where its multidisciplinary expertise, existing workstreams and cooperation with Ukraine and host States could bring particular added value.

Looking ahead, the CGU could build on these discussions through targeted exchanges of national practices, practical guidance and peer learning, while ensuring meaningful child participation. The outcomes will inform further consultations on concrete activities and deliverables for 2027 and beyond, in complementarity with relevant Council of Europe initiatives.