



CONFERENCE OF INGOs  
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE  
CONFERENCE DES OING DU  
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Civil Society Committee  
on the Rights of the Child (CSC-RC)  
Comité de la Société Civile  
sur les Droits de l'Enfant (CSC-DE)

## **The fundamental rights of Ukrainian children must be respected**

2023 February 24

One year after the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, the Conference of INGOs and its Civil Society Committee on the Rights of the Child wish to raise the collective awareness of people and institutions of the Council of Europe and its member States about the dramatic living conditions of Ukrainian children: those who still live in Ukraine, those in migration, and those who are in Russia.

We call upon member states and international organisations to enforce respect for the fundamental rights of Ukrainian and all other children impacted by the current conflict and resulting crises.

### **Right to education and health**

Thousands of schools, hospitals and other education or medical facilities have been damaged or destroyed in Ukraine. After such a long series of war crimes, parents and caregivers are reluctant to send children to school, fearing for their safety. Destruction and devastation of medical institutions by attacks prevents children to access health protection. Attacks on transport and energy infrastructure limit mobility of patients and indirectly reduces enjoyment of the right to health.

The situation for children who have fled the country is also concerning. According to UNICEF, large numbers of Ukrainian refugee children are not currently enrolled in the education systems of host countries.

We join other international institutions, and particularly UNICEF, in calling for:

- an end to attacks on education, medical facilities and other civilian infrastructure.
- increased support to ensure children have access to offline learning materials and supplies.
- strong efforts to rebuild schools and hospitals.

### **Right to maintain contact with parents**

Article 9 of UNCRC declares that States Parties shall ensure that a child shall not be separated from his or her parents against their will. For many children from the Eastern part of Ukraine, this right is not respected.

The United Nations' top rights official expressed concern in July that Ukrainian children had been taken from orphanages in the eastern Donbas region and "forcibly deported" to Russia.

Recently, the head of the United Nations' refugee agency has accused Russia of violating fundamental child protection principles, by giving Russian passports to unaccompanied child refugees and by putting these children up for adoption by Russian families.

Maybe Russian adults in charge of these Ukrainian children portray themselves as saving children who are victims of the war. Nevertheless, such practices are against the international laws.

We join other international institutions, and particularly UNHRC, in calling for:

- the UNHRC to be allowed free and regular access to Ukrainian children in Russia.

### **Right to life**

The continuous attacks on civilian targets by the Russian aggressor must stop as they deprive children of their most basic human rights, killing, maiming, injuring and depriving children of their parents and caregivers.