Objective 6: Protecting children affected by and fleeing armed conflict

Session on access to education for the children of Ukraine in Council of Europe member states

Mid-Term Review Conference for the Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027)

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Children of Ukraine's access to education in Council of Europe member states

How could all displaced children of Ukraine have access to in-person education in schools of host member states while preserving their cultural identity and language?

Protecting Children's rights in crisis and emergency situations is the sixth objective of the current [Strategy for the Rights of the Child](#) (2022- 2027). Due to obstacles faced by the children of Ukraine to have their right to education respected, the Council of Europe Consultation Group on the Children of Ukraine (CGU) decided to tackle the issue. Through dialogue and by highlighting practices in Council of Europe member states, this session aims to support the CGU's efforts to lift barriers to children's integration by facilitating their access to education.

Among the 6.5 million Ukrainians who fled their country, around 40% are children and youth. Council of Europe member states must provide them the opportunity to continue their learning[1]. In May 2023, the heads of State and Government from Council of Europe member states adopted a "[Declaration on the situation of children of Ukraine](#)" to reaffirm their common commitment to guarantee, at all levels of governance, the effective protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of children of Ukraine, including the right to education[2]. The situation in certain European states is more pressing than in others: as of May 2024, more than half of those displaced from Ukraine are hosted in three countries out of 46 member states – Germany, Poland, and Czechia. This means that processes in these countries influence more than half of the learners[3].

Since the onset of the war in Ukraine, millions of children have been displaced within the country and abroad, severely disrupting their access to education. In response, the Council of Europe conducted a [mapping study](#) to examine the challenges faced by these children across member states and to identify best practices to ensure their right to education, even under exceptional circumstances. As a matter of fact, 50% of children of Ukraine who left their country due to the war are still enrolled in their host countries' education systems and 60% of children enrolled take online classes broadcast from Ukraine, in parallel with classes in regular schools.

The report highlights several key obstacles, including language barriers, lack of coordination between national education systems, and the need for psychological and educational support for children affected by war-related trauma, psychological distress and a feeling of instability. It also showcases successful initiatives, such as integrating Ukrainian children into local schools and providing access to digital learning resources, while emphasising the importance of respecting their cultural identity and language. This study marks a new step towards building resilient, inclusive education systems across Europe: it is time to move from emergency solutions to more sustainable, long-term mechanisms.

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[1] OECD, Policy Responses: Ukraine. Tackling the Policy Challenges, *Teaching Opportunities and Support for Ukrainian Educators,* 3 November 2023.
[2] European Convention on Human Rights (1952), Article 14
[3] [Operational Data Portal](#)

Aim of the session

The aim of the session is to explore how member states can effectively implement the follow-up measures outlined in the report to ensure quality access to education for children of Ukraine.

The discussion will focus on practical measures, such as fostering cross-border collaboration, enhancing teacher training, establishing monitoring mechanisms, and incorporating displaced children's perspectives.

By sharing best practices and identifying possible follow-up actions, the session seeks to support states in translating proposals into concrete and impactful actions that uphold the right to education for all children affected by the conflict.

Practical information

Session	**Children of Ukraine's access to education**
Strategic objective	Objective 6 – Protecting children affected by and fleeing armed conflicts
Day & time	Friday 4 April, 09 :00 – 12 :30
Venue	Agora Building, Council of Europe
Room	G02 and online
Languages	English only

Draft agenda

09:30	**Introduction and moderation:** *Leyla Kayacik, former Special Representative of the Secretary General on Migration and Refugees*
09:40	**I. Setting the Scene** • **Stock-taking of the CGU's achievements** in upholding the rights of the children of Ukraine affected by the armed conflict - *Benoit Van Keirsbilck, Member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and Chair of the CGU Dialogue Group on Transnational Procedures and Guardianship*
10:00	**II. Children of Ukraine's access to education in Council of Europe member states** • The [Mapping study on children of Ukraine's access to education in Council of Europe member states](), produced by the CGU Secretariat in collaboration with the Council Of Europe Education Department - *Olena Styslavska, Independent education policy expert* • Presentation of the Ukrainian Component (core curriculum) - *Oksana Kovalenko, Chief Specialist, Department of General Secondary and Pre-school Education, Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (online)* • Integration of the Ukrainian Component in CoE member states' education systems • The role of the Parliamentary Network on the situation of the Children of Ukraine in promoting access of education of the children of Ukraine - *Olena Khomenko, PACE Parliamentary Network in promoting access to education*
11:00	**III. Possible Follow-up actions –** Brainstorming in breakout sessions • Awareness raising campaigns targeting parents, guardians and children to highlight the importance of in-person schooling – *moderated by Frederik Smets, Education officer, UNHCR* • Integration of the Ukrainian Component in host states' education systems – *moderated by Olena Styslavska, Independent education policy expert*
12:00	**IV. Debrief of breakout sessions and exchange on the future work of the CGU in the area of access to education**
12:30	**End of the session**