

COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSULTATION GROUP ON THE CHILDREN OF UKRAINE (CGU)



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UPHOLDING RIGHTS OF CHILDREN AFFECTED BY RUSSIA'S WAR OF AGGRESSION IN UKRAINE

The Council of Europe Consultation Group on the Children of Ukraine (CGU): a First Milestone Year

What is CGU?

■ The CGU was set up as an emergency response to the Russian Federation's military aggression against Ukraine, following a call by the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe member states during the [Reykjavík Summit](#). This **unique multilateral cooperation platform** is dedicated to **enhancing the rights of children** affected by war in Ukraine having fled to Council of Europe member states as a result of the armed aggression.

What are the key achievements so far?

■ Since its launch on 30 November 2023:

- ▶ **43 Council of Europe member states** have appointed national experts responsible for decision making and coordination on issues related to the protection of the children of Ukraine;
- ▶ More than 20 relevant international and civil society organisations are actively participating in the dialogue to identify priority topics and to help enhance protections of the rights of children of Ukraine;
- ▶ The CGU set up **three Thematic Dialogue Groups** on the most acute topics of priority concern: **1) Transnational procedures and cooperation, 2) Guardianship, and 3) Psychological support and trauma-informed care;**
- ▶ In addition to the work of the Dialogue Groups, the CGU considers revolving thematic topics, and has held a **thematic exchange on children of Ukraine's access to education**, resulting in the production of a **Mapping study** (together with the Secretariat of the Council of Europe's Steering Committee for Education) and has held a special hearing, in close cooperation with Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), on **understanding the risks of human trafficking, including for sexual and labour exploitation, of the children of Ukraine**, resulting in a joint CGU-GRETA Secretariat hearing report;
- ▶ In addition to its standing and revolving work on thematic issues, the **CGU acts as a forum** to foster discussions between member states and relevant organisations on new challenges they are facing concerning the children of Ukraine, through meetings or bilateral or informal multilateral exchanges facilitated by the CGU Secretariat.

What are the next steps?

■ The CGU will continue to act as a flexible mechanism, reacting rapidly to evolving issues, and to delivering impactful and practical support to assist member states and professionals working with children of Ukraine. The CGU produces position papers, fact sheets, guidance notes and advice to fill the most urgent gaps identified throughout the dialogue so as to most effectively protect the rights of the children of Ukraine affected by war. These efforts include:

- ▶ drafting position papers on adoption of children during war and on guardianship arrangements concerning children of Ukraine following arrival in Council of Europe member states;
- ▶ promoting access to education and psycho-social support for children of Ukraine in schools of host member states, in collaboration with the Council of Europe's Education Department;
- ▶ facilitating discussions between member states on the preconditions for the safe return of children of Ukraine from host states to Ukraine;
- ▶ discussing how to effectively address war-related trauma of children of Ukraine through collaboration with relevant stakeholders.

Who do we work with?

- ▶ National experts mainly from Ministries of Social Affairs, as well as other relevant ministries, such as Ministries of Justice or Interior, of Council of Europe member states, as well as other Council of Europe member state agencies involved in decisions on children of Ukraine;
- ▶ The Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine;
- ▶ The Coordination Centre for Family Upbringing and Childcare Development of Ukraine;
- ▶ The State Service of Ukraine For Children;
- ▶ The Office of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights;
- ▶ International Organisations, including relevant United Nations and European Union Agencies;
- ▶ International and local Civil Society Organisations;
- ▶ Independent experts with in-depth knowledge of children rights, child protection, international law, and psycho-social support.

What is the CGU budget?

■ The CGU is currently funded under the Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine "Resilience, Recovery and Reconstruction" with a total budget of 849,143.00 EUR for 24 months (end of current mandate: 31 July 2025).

How to get more information?

- ▶ CGU webpage: www.coe.int/cgu
- ▶ Jennifer Schuetze - Reymann, Special Advisor to the Council of Europe Consultation Group on the Children of Ukraine, jennifer.schuetze-reymann@coe.int
- ▶ Begüm Simsek, Junior Project Officer for the Council of Europe Consultation Group on the Children of Ukraine, begum.simsek@coe.int
- ▶ CGU Secretariat, cgu@coe.int

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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 46 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

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