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



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Building a Europe
for and with children

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

The Council of Europe Consultation Group on the Children of Ukraine (CGU): *Turning Commitment into Action*

What is CGU?

The CGU was set up as an emergency response to the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, following a call by the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe member states during the Reykjavík Summit in May 2023. This **unique multilateral cooperation platform** is dedicated to **enhancing the rights of all children affected by the war in Ukraine,** whether they have fled or were evacuated to Council of Europe member states, remained in Ukraine, or returned to Ukraine, including their return following unlawful deportation to the Russian Federation, Belarus or temporarily occupied territories (TOTs), as a result of the aggression.

What are the key achievements so far?

Since its launch on 30 November 2023:

- **41 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;
- **Different group formats (Thematic Dialogue Groups, Focus groups)** meet regularly to discuss the most acute topics of priority concern, such as **transnational procedures and guardianship** and **psychological support and trauma-informed care**;
- The CGU also addresses key thematic topics through targeted events, such as: 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), 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,** a special hearing on preconditions for the safe return of children of Ukraine from host member states, and a special hearing on **the impact of the war on children with disabilities**;

- 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 informal exchanges facilitated by the CGU Secretariat;
- The first mandate revealed its value as both a **rapid response mechanism** and as **a peer-review platform**.

What are the next steps?

The CGU's mandate has been extended until December 2026, reaffirming its role as a flexible mechanism, reacting rapidly to evolving issues, and delivering impactful and practical support to member states and all relevant actors working with children of Ukraine. In its second phase, the CGU will place particular emphasis on emerging priority areas, including children's role in the accountability process and access to justice, conflict-related sexual violence, and bullying and harassment (including online) in educational settings. Through position papers, studies, fact sheets, guidance notes and recommendations, the CGU continues to address the most urgent gaps identified throughout the dialogue, with the aim of effectively protecting the rights of the children of Ukraine affected by war.

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, Family and Unity 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.

How is the CGU funded?

The CGU is currently funded under the Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine "Resilience, Recovery and Reconstruction".

How to get more information?

- CGU webpage: **www.coe.int/cgu**
- 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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