



CONFERENCE OF INGOs  
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

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CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

***Migration Committee Rights of person who are migrants  
Civil society Committee on the Rights of the Child***

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**Press release: Ukrainian children displaced in the Russian Federation**

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**Concerning the Situation of Ukrainian Children Deported or Forcefully Displaced  
to the Russian Federation or Temporarily Occupied Ukrainian Territories,**

In the framework of a webinar of November 17<sup>th</sup> 2023, on the impact of migration on the lives of children travelling to and in Europe, organized by the CINGO,

Insisting that the rights and best interest of all children be respected without compromise,

Building in particular on close contact with the Committee on Migration of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly and inspired by the latter's Pisco Report<sup>1</sup> as referred to out,

while also based on extensive exchanges with relevant civil society actors in Ukraine,

the Committee on the "Rights of Migrant Persons" and the Committee on "Civil Society and Children Rights" of the Conference of INGOs (CINGO) of the Council of Europe jointly wish to draw full and urgent attention to the tragic situation of thousands of Ukrainian children being deported, forced into a Russification process and finally integrated into Russian and Belarus societies by means of adoption and a formula of guardianship, deliberately made untraceable for the legitimate parents or wider families in Ukraine. From the start of the invasion of Ukraine, attention of stakeholders has in the past already been drawn to the difficult situation of Ukrainian children in several declarations by said civil society committees.

During the November 17th webinar, it was indisputably underscored, in confirmation with the findings of M. Paulo Pisco, that those child deportations to the Russian Federation and Belarus are flagrant and systematic violations of elementary human rights and children rights, and that on the side of the perpetrating authorities there is a consistent underlying policy at work, aimed at ethnic cleansing. Resolution 2448<sup>2</sup>, adopted by the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly, stipulates that the forcible transfer of children from one group to another group, with the intention to destroy, totally or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group is considered as a crime of genocide under Article 2, paragraph (e), of the Genocide Convention. This definition matches with the documented evidence of deportation and forcible transfer of Ukrainian children to the Russian Federation or territories temporarily under Russian occupation.

Regrettably, the issue has so far not really garnered the attention it deserves, neither at political level, nor in the media, press and consequently public opinion. This political and public attention is very crucial, though, first of all as it can be very instrumental in enhancing the daily efforts to bring individual abducted children back to their Ukrainian families and homes, secondly in order to document this tragic situation, substantiating eventual post-war actions for accountability.

In this context, the above-mentioned Committees of the CINGO, and along with them, relevant civil society organisations in Ukraine, express their hopes that the outcome of the webinar of November 17th may be instrumental in bringing the issue more to the forefront of political and public attention, as it concretely deserves, and as it ethically requires.

Strasbourg, December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023.

1 Doc. 15748 of April 25, 2023: Deportations and forcible transfers of Ukrainian children and other civilians to Russian Federation or to Ukrainian territories temporarily occupied: create conditions for their safe return, stop these crimes and punish the perpetrators.

2 Resolution 2448 (2022) Humanitarian consequences and internal and external displacement in connection with the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine.