

Recommendation 2253 (2023)¹

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

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Assembly, referring to its [Resolution 2495 \(2023\)](#) “Deportations and forcible transfers of Ukrainian children and other civilians to the Russian Federation or to temporarily occupied Ukrainian territories: create conditions for their safe return, stop these crimes and punish the perpetrators”, deplores and condemns the massive violations of international law caused by the full-scale war of aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine and the resulting deportations and forcible transfers of thousands of civilians, in particular children, to the Russian Federation, to temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine and to Belarus. The repatriation of children, their rehabilitation and the creation of conditions for family reunification to preserve the identity of the children of Ukraine must now be a priority for the Council of Europe member States.
2. The Assembly welcomes, therefore, the preparation by the Committee of Ministers of a declaration on the situation of Ukrainian children affected by the Russian Federation’s continued aggression against Ukraine. This declaration was initiated by the Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF), with a view to its adoption by the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe at the 4th Summit (16-17 May 2023, Reykjavik, Iceland), and underscores the need to guarantee the effective protection of the rights of children of Ukraine. The Assembly trusts that the Committee of Ministers will ensure adequate follow-up to this Reykjavik declaration and stands ready for future co-operation on this issue.
3. The Assembly welcomes the Committee of Ministers’ initiatives, and the subsequent proposals of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, to ensure that the Council of Europe contributes to establishing accountability for the Russian Federation’s aggression against Ukraine, bringing to justice all those responsible for deportations and forcible displacements, and securing justice for victims, including the establishment of a register to record and document evidence and claims of damage, loss or injury as a result of the Russian aggression against Ukraine.
4. The Assembly supports the recommendations put forward by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights that concrete mechanisms and solutions be urgently identified and used to reunite with their families all children transferred from Ukraine to Russia and to temporarily Russian-occupied territories, including through the identification and registration of unaccompanied and separated children from Ukraine and the facilitation of family tracing and reunification procedures. It calls upon the Committee of Ministers to assist Ukraine in this process. The Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine “Resilience, Recovery and Reconstruction” (2023-2026) should be instrumental in reaching these aims. A special effort should be made to support the work of the Coordination Council of Ukraine for the Protection and Safety of Children under the auspices of the Office of the President of Ukraine and the work of the Office of the Ukrainian Parliament

1. *Assembly debate* on 27 April 2023 (13th sitting) (see [Doc. 15748](#), report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons, rapporteur: Mr Paolo Pisco; and oral opinion of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, rapporteur: Ms Carmen Leyte). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 27 April 2023 (13th sitting).



Commissioner for Human Rights on the return of Ukrainian children from deportation. In this regard, the development of a new “Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals” course on the deportation of children can be envisaged.

5. The Assembly calls upon the Committee of Ministers to ensure effective protection of migrants and refugees in a vulnerable situation, especially women and children fleeing Ukraine, through the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Migration and Refugees in the framework of the “Council of Europe Action Plan on Protecting Vulnerable Persons in the Context of Migration and Asylum in Europe (2021-2025)”.

6. The Assembly trusts that the Secretary General will ensure co-ordination of all actions taken to protect the rights of children of Ukraine and will inform the Committee of Ministers and the Assembly of progress achieved. The Assembly recommends that appropriate communication mechanisms be established in co-operation with the Ukrainian authorities and with other international organisations, such as the European Union institutions, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the International Organization for Migration, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and national and international civil society organisations.