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The enforced disappearance of newborns, infants and children

Motion for a resolution

tabled by Ms Laura CASTEL and other members of the Assembly

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

The enforced disappearance of newborns, infants and children, often for purposes of trafficking or illegal adoption, has occurred in several Council of Europe member States for decades. In Spain, since the Civil War and throughout the dictatorship, thousands of republican women and female prisoners were targeted, with cases continuing after democracy was established. Comparable patterns have been reported in Ireland, Belgium, Norway, Serbia and, most recently, in the context of the Russian Federation's war against Ukraine.

The Parliamentary Assembly [Resolution 2425 \(2022\)](#) "Ending enforced disappearances on the territory of the Council of Europe", underlines that such practices constitute a particularly grave violation of human rights, affecting both the victims and their families. The Committee of Ministers agrees and considers that these practices may amount to crimes against humanity.

The continuing lack of comprehensive data, fragmented investigations, and the denial or minimisation of these crimes in certain member States are regrettable.

There is an urgent need to address the specific dimension of newborn and child disappearances, which involve falsification of identity, loss of family ties, and profound psychological trauma.

Accordingly, the Assembly should investigate how:

- member States can effectively document and investigate cases of newborn and child disappearances, declassify relevant archives, and establish accessible DNA registries;
- Committee of Ministers and the Steering Committee on Human Rights (CDDH) can assess the need for additional legal instruments, including non-binding guidelines or a binding protocol, to protect against identity theft and illegal adoption;
- a dedicated task force on enforced disappearances of children can be established to co-ordinate national and international efforts, monitor compliance, and support victims;
- a European or world conference to share data, best practices, and legal reforms can be organised;
- member States can provide victims with legal, psychological and identity-restoration support, recognising their right to truth and reparation.

Signed (see overleaf)



Signed¹:

CASTEL Laura, Spain, UEL
CATHALA Gabrielle, France, UEL
ÇELENK Sevilay, Türkiye, UEL
CHIKIROU Sophia, France, UEL
ĐORĐEVIĆ Vladimir, Serbia, ECPA
FERNANDES Emmanuel, France, UEL
GLASER Vinzenz, Germany, UEL
GUTIÉRREZ LIMONES Antonio, Spain, SOC
JULHAKYAN Arusyak, Armenia, EPP/CD
LICHERI Ettore Antonio, Italy, UEL
LOUCAIDES George, Cyprus, UEL
MAIORINO Alessandra, Italy, UEL
MARTINEZ SEIJO Luz, Spain, SOC
MURPHY Conor, Ireland, UEL
ÖZTÜRK Berdan, Türkiye, UEL
PÁLMASSON Sigurður Helgi, Iceland, SOC
STAMATIS Georgios, Greece, EPP/CD
STARÎȘ Constantin, Republic of Moldova, UEL
VELA Susanna, Andorra, SOC
VOKSHI Albana, Albania, EPP/CD

1. ECPA: European Conservatives, Patriots and Affiliates
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left