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Unaccompanied foreign minors in the context of migration: the need for common standards in full respect of children's rights

Motion for a resolution
tabled by the Committee on Migration, International Protection and Economic Co-operation

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

In the context of migration, unaccompanied minors require special attention and a specific approach, given their high vulnerability to violence, exploitation and abuse. Their treatment often lacks the procedural safeguards necessary to protect their rights as established by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international instruments.

Age assessment is of crucial importance. Following the Parliamentary Assembly's lead, the Committee of Ministers, in its Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)22 to member States on human rights principles and guidelines on age assessment in the context of migration, emphasised the need to respect the principle of the presumption of minority, and called on member States to implement multidisciplinary and evidence-based age assessment procedures.

In Resolution 2613 (2025) "The challenges and needs of public and private actors involved in migration management", the Assembly invited member States to ensure minimum standards for assistance and reception, paying particular attention to vulnerable groups, such as children and unaccompanied minors, guaranteeing safe spaces in transit and reception facilities, and supporting inclusion and autonomy. Italy, for example, has established a guardianship system for unaccompanied minors designed to accompany them through the phases of reception, education and integration.

In the context of the EU Pact on Asylum and Migration, the new screening regulation at borders applies to unaccompanied minors, as well as to their detention under specific conditions. All these procedures risk being incompatible with international human rights law and standards.

The Assembly, having reviewed existing legislation and good practices regarding unaccompanied minors, should propose a set of minimum procedural standards that fully respect their rights for implementation by member States.