



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council No.1492 Vienna, 17 October 2024

#### EU Statement on International Day of the Girl Child

1. On 11 October, we marked the International Day of the Girl Child, highlighting the needs and challenges girls around the world are facing, while at the same time promoting girls' empowerment and their full enjoyment of human rights. This year's theme, "Girls' Vision for the Future", emphasises the importance of listening to girls' perspectives and aspirations as we strive for a better world.
2. The EU remains committed to protecting all the rights of girls across the world. Today we will pay special attention to the girls and boys suffering under Russia's unprovoked, unjustifiable and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine. The grave violations against children in Ukraine committed by Russia have exacerbated their needs for protection, mental health and psychological support, food, healthcare, education, and sanitation. Ongoing Russian violence across Ukraine has created a long-lasting child rights crisis, including those of girls.
3. According to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights of the United Nations, 641 children have been killed and 1607 have been wounded since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022. Additionally, according to Ukrainian authorities, more than 19 500 children have been reported deported or forcibly displaced. According to the Moscow Mechanism reports, these children are exposed to pro-Russian information campaigns that often amount to targeted re-education and are also victims of military indoctrination.

4. Nearly two thirds of Ukraine's children, including girls, have been forced to flee their homes. One in five school-aged children still accesses education exclusively through online modalities while another 22 per cent learn through blended modalities. Thousands of Ukrainian children have never set foot in classrooms or even met with their teachers and classmates in person.
5. The coming winter is expected to be the hardest since the start of Russia's war of aggression, especially for children. 10 per cent of housing in the country has been damaged or destroyed, affecting two million households, and national energy generation is now at one-third of pre-war capacity. 2.9 million children in Ukraine, including girls, are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance.
6. We urge the aggressor, Russia, to immediately stop its unprovoked, unjustifiable, and illegal war of aggression, and to completely and unconditionally withdraw all its forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. Children, including girls, should not have to grow up in the midst of war.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\*, SERBIA\*, ALBANIA\*, UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA\*, and GEORGIA, as well as ANDORRA, MONACO and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

\* North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.