



EUROPEAN UNION

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EU Statement on the report under the OSCE Moscow Mechanism regarding the militarization and indoctrination of Ukrainian children

The European Union welcomes Prof. Hervé Ascensio, Dr. Elīna Šteinerte, and Prof. Stefan Wolff to the Permanent Council and thanks them for their independent, impartial and thorough assessment. We also thank Ukraine for inviting the expert mission under the Moscow Mechanism and for facilitating its work, as well as ODIHR for its technical assistance.

The Moscow Mechanism was invoked by 41 participating States, including all EU Member States, in light of credible and mounting reports that the Russian Federation is systematically subjecting Ukrainian children – especially those staying in temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine and those forcibly transferred to such territories or unlawfully deported to Russia – to militarization, indoctrination, coercion and other repressive practices aimed at, *inter alia*, erasing Ukrainian identity and compelling loyalty to the occupying power.

The findings of the expert mission are devastating, confirming that Russia has committed multiple violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) and systematic and overlapping violations of international human rights law (IHRL). According to the Mission's report, the best interests of the child — the paramount obligation under Article 3 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child — were disregarded in every dimension of Russia's policy. The report documents violations of children's rights to identity, family and family reunification, education, access to information, rest, leisure, play, recreation and participation in cultural life and the arts, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, health, and liberty and security of person. It further finds that Russia has violated IHL by failing to preserve, as far as possible, the existing legal and

educational systems in occupied territory, by unlawfully altering the personal status of Ukrainian children, and by disregarding the special protections owed to them.

The experts conclude that Russia has established a coordinated and systematic policy aimed at erasing the Ukrainian identity of children. This policy operates through the education system, imposed school curricula, military-patriotic training, youth movements, extracurricular programmes, and the wider legislative architecture governing education, citizenship, family law, and so-called counter-extremism. The report further explains that, in occupied territories, this system constitutes a pipeline toward eventual service — conscripted or contracted — in the Russian armed forces.

The Mission also reaches deeply alarming conclusions under international criminal law, stating that Russia's broader policy of indoctrination and militarisation of Ukrainian children, carried out on discriminatory grounds as part of a widespread and systematic attack, may amount to a crime against humanity in the form of persecution. Also, a high number of incidents that occurred throughout the period under review, in various locations within the occupied territories, which are related to the coercion exercised against children, their families and their teachers may be classified as war crimes.

The report confirms and deepens concerns already raised by previous Moscow Mechanism reports, by the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine, and by civil society and other international actors, to which the European Union has already responded. As of May 2026, the European Union has adopted sanctions against 131 individuals and entities responsible for the systematic unlawful deportation, forced transfer, forced assimilation, including indoctrination and militarised education, of Ukrainian minors, as well as their unlawful adoption and removal to the Russian Federation and within temporarily occupied territories. As a member of the *International Coalition for the Return of Ukrainian Children*, the EU remains committed to the protection of Ukrainian children and supports all efforts aimed at securing their return, reintegration and rehabilitation.

We call on Russia to implement without delay the recommendations of the Moscow Mechanism report and immediately facilitate the safe return of all deported and forcibly transferred Ukrainian children. We also encourage all participating States to support implementation of the Mission's recommendations and relevant accountability efforts.

Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Republic of Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, San Marino, and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.