



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1579 Vienna, 1 October 2026

EU Statement in response to the address by United Nations Under-Secretary-General Ms. Vanessa Frazier, Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict

1. The European Union thanks Ms Vanessa Frazier for her intervention and expresses its strong support for the mandate of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC). The respect, protection and fulfilment of the rights of the child remain a key objective of the European Union's internal and external action. This issue is also of continued importance within the OSCE, whose mandate, tools and expertise can meaningfully contribute to addressing the impact of conflict and violence on children.
2. Children continue to be disproportionately affected by armed conflict. Around 20% of children worldwide (around half a billion) are living in or fleeing conflict zones. When children are killed or maimed, used or recruited, abducted, subjected to sexual violence, denied humanitarian assistance, or prevented from accessing education or healthcare by attacks on schools and hospitals, the consequences are both immediate and long-lasting. The EU remains unwavering in condemning the six grave violations against children in armed conflict, as identified by the UN Security Council.
3. We regard the UN Secretary-General's Annual Report as an indispensable monitoring and accountability tool. Its latest findings are deeply alarming. We are gravely concerned by the unprecedented number of children affected and, in particular, by the sharp increase in children subjected to multiple grave violations, including the alarming rise in killing and maiming.
4. The EU recognises the value of global initiatives such as the Paris Principles and Commitments, the Vancouver Principles, the Safe Schools Declaration, and the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian

Consequences arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas. We continue to encourage all participating States to consider endorsing these initiatives.

5. The EU is particularly active in protecting children's rights in conflict and crisis situations. In June 2024, we adopted an important update to our CAAC Guidelines, which serve as an operational framework for EU institutions and Member States and provide a comprehensive toolbox for our action, from conflict prevention to humanitarian assistance, peacebuilding, and crisis management. We also updated the checklist for integrating the protection of children affected by armed conflict into our Common Security and Defence Policy missions and operations. The EU is committed to ensuring that children rights, including the best interests of the child, guide all humanitarian interventions.
6. The European Union also recognises psychological trauma as a long-term consequence of the six grave violations and therefore pursues a holistic approach, including support for reintegration and rehabilitation programs.
7. We are increasingly concerned by the use of emerging technologies in warfare, including artificial intelligence in automated targeting processes, digital surveillance, online recruitment, and explosive drones. These developments heighten risks for children, particularly in densely populated areas. In this regard, we welcome the joint statement by UN agencies on artificial intelligence and child rights.
8. We remain deeply alarmed by the devastating impact of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine on children, including through indiscriminate attacks, displacement, unlawful deportation and forcible transfer, as well as militarisation and indoctrination. Russia's continued attacks on civilians and civilian objects have led to a rising number of child casualties, with July recording the highest monthly total since April 2022. We are fully committed to ensuring full accountability for all violations of international law and to supporting the return, reintegration and rehabilitation of Ukrainian children. The EU has also mobilised an additional €50 million to strengthen Ukraine's child protection system. We also welcome the steps taken by the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict to help secure the immediate, safe and unconditional return of Ukrainian children, in line with the UN resolution on the return of Ukrainian children adopted in December 2025.
9. We call on Russia to immediately implement the recommendations of the two Moscow Mechanism reports on children and facilitate the safe return of all unlawfully deported

and forcibly transferred Ukrainian children. We also encourage all participating States to address the missions' findings and support relevant accountability efforts.

10. Russia's war of aggression has also exacerbated children's needs for protection and access to healthcare, including mental health and psychological support. We express our appreciation of the Support Programme for Ukraine and its projects, which also addresses some of the immediate repercussions for children's rights.

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