



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1579 Vienna, 1 October 2026

EU Statement on “*Pathways to Peace: Second International Conference on Returning Ukrainian Children, Detained Civilians, and Prisoners of War*”

1. We welcome the Conference “*Pathways to Peace: Second International Conference on Returning Ukrainian Children, Detained Civilians and Prisoners of War*”, held in Toronto on 28–29 September and co-chaired by Canada, Ukraine and Norway, its commitment to securing the return, rehabilitation and reintegration of unlawfully deported Ukrainian children, detained civilians and prisoners of war, placing human dignity at the centre of peace efforts.
2. We support all efforts aimed at addressing the urgent humanitarian consequences of Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine and underline the need for strengthened international coordination, including through existing mechanisms such as the International Coalition for the Return of Ukrainian Children, relevant United Nations mechanisms, the Council of Europe and the OSCE.
3. As stated on many occasions, including today, the European Union remains deeply alarmed by the devastating impact of Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine on children. Thousands of Ukrainian children have been unlawfully deported or forcibly transferred, while returns remain limited and uneven. We reiterate our call for the immediate, safe and unconditional return of all Ukrainian children unlawfully deported or forcibly transferred by Russia. We support efforts to facilitate their safe return, rehabilitation and reintegration, and underline the importance of accountability for violations of international law. The European Union has just adopted further restrictive measures against 10 individuals and 17 entities over the systematic unlawful deportation and forcible transfer of Ukrainian children to Russia and temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, as well as their forced assimilation, including through indoctrination and militarised education.

4. We reiterate our call on Russia to release immediately and unconditionally all unlawfully detained civilians, including the three OSCE staff members — Vadym Golda, Maksym Petrov and Dmytro Shabanov. We also call on the Russian Federation to comply fully with its obligations under international humanitarian law in its treatment of Ukrainian prisoners of war. We call for an immediate end to all torture, ill-treatment and executions of prisoners of war, and for the International Committee of the Red Cross to be granted full and unimpeded access to all places where Ukrainian prisoners of war are held.

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