



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1538 Vienna, 16 October 2025

EU Statement on International Day of the Girl Child

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. The EU reconfirms its commitment to the advancement and full enjoyment of girls' and children's rights worldwide. The EU also supports the OSCE's continued engagement in preventing and combating violence against women and girls and in promoting gender equality, in line with our agreed commitments.

Today we pay special attention to the girls and boys suffering in Ukraine as Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine continues to have a devastating impact on their lives. Based on United Nations data and according to *Save the Children*, the period from February 2022 to September 2025 has seen 733 children across Ukraine killed, and another 2 285 injured. According to UNHCR, more than 2 million children have been forced to leave the country. And, according to UNICEF reports, those children at frontline areas have spent up to 5 000 hours – nearly 7 months – sheltering underground.

Moreover, children in Ukraine face specific risks from limited access to education. Russian attacks on education facilities in Ukraine have forced thousands of children into online-learning and underground classrooms or to remain out of school entirely, with long term consequences for their well-being and development. Over one-third of students were not fully learning in classrooms and 11 per cent relied exclusively on online education at the end of the 2024/25 academic year.

We are deeply concerned about the fate of the Ukrainian children deported to Russia or forcibly transferred within temporarily occupied Ukrainian territories. We remain committed to the protection of children as a member of the International Coalition for the Return of Ukrainian Children and reiterate the urgency of ensuring their immediate and safe return to Ukraine.

The war 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.

We continue to advocate for the Organisation's sustained engagement in and support to Ukraine, and in addressing the consequences of Russia's war of aggression, including those related to children's rights. We also call for accountability for all international crimes and human rights violations and abuses in the context of Russia's war of aggression. Children, including girls, should not have to grow up in the midst of war.

We support the full implementation of the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda to guarantee children's rights in times of conflicts and in times of peace.

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