

Resolution on the EU's protection of children and young people fleeing the war in Ukraine

2022/2618(RSP) - 07/04/2022 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 509 votes to 3, with 47 abstentions, a resolution on the EU's protection of children and young people fleeing the war in Ukraine.

The text adopted in plenary was tabled by the EPP, S&D, Renew, Greens/EFA and the Left groups.

According to the latest reports, over 3.7 million refugees have fled Ukraine since the beginning of the war, a figure which is expected to increase. Most of these refugees have fled to EU neighbouring countries, namely Poland, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia and Czechia, as well as to the Republic of Moldova.

Women and children make up 90 % of all refugees fleeing Ukraine with almost half of the refugees fleeing Ukraine of school age. Moreover, children, especially when unaccompanied, are at increased risk of violence, abuse and exploitation and there is an increased risk for children of going missing and falling victim to trafficking, especially when moving across borders.

The resolution recalled the importance of the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child, the Child Guarantee, the EU Strategy on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, the EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030, as well as all existing EU legal instruments, including the Temporary Protection Directive in supporting the Member States to help them address the specific needs of children fleeing the war. In particular, it welcomed the Commission and the French Presidency of the Council's 10-point plan for stronger European coordination in welcoming refugees from Ukraine.

Parliament noted the **EU platform for registration**, which aims to enable Member States to exchange information to ensure that people enjoying temporary or adequate protection under national law can effectively benefit from their rights in all Member States, while limiting possible abuse. It also called for the creation of safe passages and humanitarian **corridors for children** fleeing the conflict, both those who are unaccompanied and those with families, and for the provision of the urgent help needed by children who are internally displaced, stranded in, or unable to leave encircled areas.

According to Parliament, child protection officers should be present at the border in order to identify the vulnerabilities of these children, in particular by accurately identifying and recording the child's nationality, statelessness or risk of statelessness on arrival, and referring them to the adequate services, including psychosocial and maternal health support.

The resolution stressed the importance of putting in place an EU strategy to step up humanitarian action on the ground to rescue families and children, in particular vulnerable children, including those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, those in institutional care and foster care, those in hospital, as well as children with disabilities, orphans and unaccompanied children, especially in combat zones.

The resolution also called for:

- the promotion of **relocation mechanisms** including safe, fast and coordinated transportation across the Member States for children and their families already present in neighbouring Member States, especially for unaccompanied children and children with disabilities, who require specific care, in close cooperation with Ukrainian authorities and Ukrainian consular services in the EU, where needed for health reasons;

- a coordinated approach between Member States in the programming and implementation of EU funds and include **dedicated measures to invest in children and young people** in their national recovery and resilience plans in order to access the fund, as per the Next Generation pillar of the Recovery and Resilience Facility and the Cohesion Action for Refugees in Europe (CARE);
- flexibility to be shown in cases where administrative documents are missing;
- increased funding of the European Child Guarantee with a dedicated budget of at least **EUR 20 billion** in order to combat the poverty that is affecting children and their families and to contribute to the goal of reducing poverty by at least 15 million by 2030.