



Unaccompanied Children arriving from Ukraine: activities of the European Guardianship Network, March 27, 2022

Background to EGN

The European Guardianship Network brings together guardianship authorities and agencies, international and non-governmental organisations concerned with guardianship for unaccompanied children. It promotes guardianship and improves guardianship services for unaccompanied and separated children in the EU through exchange of experience and good practice and working together on key issues of concern, such as developing ways to promote better cross-border coordination.

Unaccompanied children arriving from Ukraine: what we have done to date

Given the ongoing Ukraine conflict, our members came together in an on-line meeting on March 15 to exchange on what they are seeing in their different countries, in terms of the numbers of children arriving without their parents (either alone or with other adults who have no parental responsibility), and the issues they face. The European Commission and other actors, such as Missing Children Europe, joined to share updates and developments.

Common challenges identified

Members identified common challenges such as:

- What forms of guardianship are available, or may need to be put in place or better supported, for unaccompanied children and children of deprived of parental care arriving from Ukraine;
- how authorities, agencies and organizations providing guardianship can collaborate:
 - to ensure the existing processes are adapted/new processes put in place in anticipation of arrivals and
 - to work together in practice in the coming months to ensure unaccompanied children have access to protection, services and safety;
- exploring what kind of cross border cooperation will be needed between guardianship organisations, given the movement of Ukrainian persons across EU borders, including in relation to spontaneous arrivals from other countries, transfers under the temporary protection directive and disappearances/trafficking of children;
- continuing to meet the needs of unaccompanied children from other countries, who have been arriving in some countries in significant numbers in recent times.

Next Steps: the EGN plans to continue to:

- **Learn what is happening on the ground:** survey and exchange on what members are seeing in terms of numbers of children arriving without parental care from Ukraine, cross border

procedures involving children, appointment of guardians, challenges that they see for guardianship and the children; follow up on-line meeting; contact, where possible, responsible/involved organizations in countries such as Poland Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Moldova to ask them what is needed and to offer support;

- **Meet challenges together:** including by and exploring specific issues and experience through thematic working groups and developing common resources, in line with resources;
- **Contribute to new European measures and help our members use them:** share with policy makers what members are seeing in terms of trends, challenges and good practices; engage with EU on measures being developed for unaccompanied children and children deprived of parental care from the perspective of guardianship; share with Members new EU measures and action, as it is developed;
- **Work with regional stakeholders:** continue engagement from the perspective of guardianship with other regional stakeholders working with unaccompanied children, with a focus on child protection (for example, on responses to disappearances).

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