

Investment in humanity: Russia must be held accountable for deportations of Ukrainian children, says EU

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On 13 March, the European Commission reported to the European Parliament on its activities in connection with Russia's forced deportation of Ukrainian children.

In a speech on behalf of the EU High Representative Josep Borrell, European Commission Vice-President for Democracy and Demography, Dubravka Šuica, said that the EU fully supports a number of different initiatives.

The European Union participates in the Ukrainian initiative 'Bring kids back UA', supported by President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy's office. This initiative unites the efforts of the Ukrainian authorities, foreign governments and international organisations and works on returns, on accountability, and

on prevention.

In Kyiv, the European Union is part of the 'Group of friends on children and armed conflict in Ukraine' with other foreign missions.

The European Union also supports and engages with the United Nations' Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC) mandate and welcomes Russia being included in its "list of shame" for the first time this year.

According to Šuica, the EU takes all necessary efforts to ensure that those responsible for the crime of unlawful deportation or transfer of Ukrainian children are held accountable.

Seventeen Member States have so far opened investigations into international crimes committed in Ukraine, and the European Union is supporting these national investigations through strengthening judicial cooperation via Eurojust. Six Member States and Ukraine are members of the Joint Investigation Team, to which the International Criminal Court (ICC) and Europol are participants.

The European Union has so far supported the ICC with over €10 million since the beginning of the invasion. The EU also supports the Prosecutor General's Office of Ukraine to strengthen its capacities to investigate and prosecute international crimes committed in Ukraine, including the IT advancement worth €4 million.

The EU has also imposed sanctions on 39 individuals for the deportations and forced transport of Ukrainian children.

"Russia must be held accountable for these horrible acts. This is a terrible crime, inflicting unimaginable suffering," said Šuica. "Investing in children is an investment in Ukrainians' future, in Europe's future and in a safer world. So, it is an investment in humanity."