Moving Beyond Uncertainty:

Displaced Youth of Ukraine Transitioning to Adulthood in Europe

Date: 15 October 2026

Place: Comic Art Museum, Brussels, Belgium

Since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, many children and adolescents displaced across Europe have been transitioning into adulthood while adapting to new educational, social, and cultural environments. As they navigate this transition, they face complex decisions about education, employment, legal status, identity, belonging, and future pathways, including whether to remain in their host countries, return to Ukraine, or build lives across borders. While significant efforts have focused on responding to the immediate consequences of displacement, the specific realities of this generation transitioning into adulthood remain comparatively underexplored and insufficiently addressed. At the same time, gaps in accessible, youth-friendly information and support systems may increase vulnerability to risks such as social exclusion, going missing, labour exploitation, and trafficking.

The conference will bring together displaced young people, researchers, practitioners, policymakers, civil society organisations, and European stakeholders to examine these emerging challenges and opportunities. Drawing on the findings of the **YoU Decide** project, the event will present new evidence on the experiences, needs, aspirations, and priorities of displaced Ukrainian youth, while showcasing promising practices and innovative approaches to supporting their transition into adulthood. Through dialogue across policy, research, and practice, the conference aims to identify recommendations at local, national, and European levels that strengthen youth participation, improve access to support, and contribute to the efforts in helping this generation in building stable and meaningful futures.

Ultimately, the conference seeks to shift the conversation from responding to displacement towards supporting displaced young people in shaping their futures as active participants in their communities and in the decisions that affect their lives.

YoU Decide: Supporting Displaced Youth of Ukraine *is an EU-funded project* ***ESF+ Social Innovation+ Initiative***

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Draft Conference Agenda

15 October | 08:30 – 16:00 | Brussels

Time	Session	Speakers
08:30–09:00	**Registration and Coffee**	Arrival and networking
09:00–09:10	**Welcome**	**Aagje Ieven**, Secretary-General, Missing Children Europe
09:10–09:20	**Keynote Address**	Head of the Mission of Ukraine to the EU
09:20–09:30	**Keynote Address**	**Petras Auštrevičius**, Member of European Parliament*
09:30–09:40	**Introduction**	Introduction by **Federico Guerrieri**, Conference Facilitator
09:40–10:40	**Research Panel: Understanding the Realities of Young People Transitioning into Adulthood: Research findings and lessons learned from co-creative methodology**	• **Lina Vosyliute**. Founder of Heartwarmingly/ Senior Associate Researcher at the Brussels School of Governance, VUB • **Jennifer Allsopp**, Heartwarmingly Research Team/ Associate Professor at the University of Birmingham • **Helena Wacko**, Heartwarmingly Research Team/ Gender and Intersectionality Expert • Youth Board members: **Diana Hunaidulina**, **Ruslan Binazarov** and **Herman Barushkov**
10:40–11:00	**Coffee Break**	
11:00-11:10	**Special Address**	**Ilona Havronska**, Ukraine's Deputy Minister of Social Policy, Family and Unity for European Integration - Ukraine's support initiatives for young people displaced in Europe

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11:10–12:45	**Practitioners Panel: Creating Support Systems that Enable Young People to Thrive** **Part I: Building on What Works: Scaling and Adapting Solutions for Displaced Youth from Ukraine**	Facilitation: **Laszlo Fejos**, Tdh Hungary • **Roman Makukha**, ICMPD – Unity Hubs and Ukrainian Consultation Centres across Europe: lessons learned and way forward • **Olsi Dudumi**, Terre des hommes Lausanne – Resilience Innovation Facilities (RIF) (Hungary, Romania and Ukraine) • **Andrea Tedde**, MCE - Miniila: scaling a digital information tool across countries and adapting to youth information needs
	Part II: Support Services and Programmes for Displaced Youth from Ukraine: Lessons Learned and Future Directions	Brief pitch-format introductions with continuation to the World Cafe mode **Speakers:** • **Mariya Boguslav**, Coordinator of EduHub Network of the Association of innovative and digital education AIDE– StepToJob project: Employment pathways for youth • **Iryna Garvanko & Daria Iakovenko**, Child Welfare Consultants at Child Helpline, Børns Vilkår –Between Two Worlds: Ukrainian Students in Danish Schools. • **Peter Bennet** - Youth for Unity and Play4Unity • **Olena Sakovych**, Program Coordinator, UNICEF – PATHWAYS initiative: Education and career support • **Elisa Pothee**, Kids in Need of Defence (KIND) Europe – Holistic support for young Ukrainians on the move
12:45–13:45	**Lunch Break**	

Time	Session	Speakers
13:45–14:45	**Youth Board Session: Building Futures Across Borders**	**You Decide Youth Advisory Board:** Diana Hubaidulina Anastasiya Krapivkina Ruslan Binazarov David Prohonnyi Viktoriia Romanova Herman Barushkov Timur Zdan-Marchiev Polina Sukach
14:45–15:45	**Policy Panel: Moving Beyond Temporariness: Building Sustainable Futures for Young People Displaced from Ukraine**	**Facilitation: Alyona Samar**, Senior Programmes Officer, MCE **Speakers:** • **Isabella Atanasiu**, Legal Officer, DG HOME , European Commission • **Ilona Havronska**, Ukraine's Deputy Minister of Social Policy, Family and Unity for European Integration • **Angela Moore**, UNHCR, Head of Policy and Legal Support Unit, Representation for EU Affairs • Lithuanian Permanent Representation (upcoming Council presidency)*
15:45–16:00	**Closing Reflections**	YoU Decide Project team **Alyona Samar**, Missing Children Europe
16:00	**End of Conference**	Group Photo

Speaker participation marked with an asterisk is subject to final confirmation. The programme may be updated as further confirmations are received.

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