

Establishing the EU–Ukraine Youth Recovery Track

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Presented by SM, Ukraine

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Recognizing that:

- In February 2022, the Russian Federation launched an unprovoked full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which has changed life in Ukraine forever;
- The Russian invasion has caused mass destruction and triggered one of the biggest humanitarian crises of the 21st century;
- Throughout history, youth has consistently played a crucial role as a force of change, bringing forward new ideas and energy;
- Ukrainian youth must take an active role in the future recovery of Ukraine, as a generation of future leaders who will guide the country through the coming decades;
- A successful recovery is a vital component of Ukraine's European integration, which will create deeper ties between Ukraine and the European Union; therefore, the engagement of Ukrainian youth in this process represents a strategic investment in fostering a better understanding of the EU's internal processes and agenda;
- The active involvement of Ukrainian youth in shaping national and European reforms will ensure sustainable democratic change and increase public trust in institutions;
- YEPP, as the largest youth political organization on the continent, has the full legitimacy to support the role of Ukrainian youth in the future recovery of Ukraine;

Acknowledging that:

Over 7 million citizens of Ukraine are under the age of 35;

- In key Ukrainian recovery initiatives — such as the Ukraine Facility Plan¹ or Ukraine Recovery Conference² — youth participation and empowerment in decision-making processes remain limited and underrepresented;
- Ukraine is currently the most heavily mined country in the world, with estimates suggesting it may take up to 30 years to complete demining and clearance of unexploded ordnance³ ;
- The demining of the Black Sea is expected to take up to five years, significantly affecting trade and regional security⁴;
- Ukraine will require at least \$524 billion over the next decade to fund reconstruction and recovery efforts⁵;
- Reconstruction is critically needed across multiple sectors, including housing, transportation, energy and extractives, commerce and industry, and agriculture;
- The share of Ukrainian refugees who plan to return home has dropped to 43% by the end of 2024, compared to 74% in December 2022, indicating uncertainty about long-term recovery prospects⁶;
- The economic recovery of Ukraine is progressing slower than expected, with GDP still below pre-invasion levels and many sectors struggling to regain stability⁷;
- Given these realities, Ukraine's recovery will be a long-term process, likely to span years or even decades, and will depend heavily on the engagement of young people under the age of 35, who will ultimately be responsible for completing this task;

YEPP calls on:

- Members of the European Parliament from the European People Party to advocate within the EP and European Commission for the establishment of a dedicated EU–Ukraine Youth Recovery Track, supported through relevant EU funding instruments;

¹ <https://www.ukrainefacility.me.gov.ua/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/ukraine-facility-plan.pdf>

² <https://www.urc-international.com/past-conferences/urc24/news-2024/conference-materials-urc-2024>

³ <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2024/10/10/what-will-it-take-to-demine-ukraine-the-worlds-largest-minefield>

⁴ <https://ukdefencejournal.org.uk/demining-the-black-sea/>

⁵ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/ukraine/overview>

⁶ <https://kyivindependent.com/5-2-million-ukrainian-refugees-remain-abroad-less-than-half-plan-to-return-poll-says/>

⁷ https://ces.org.ua/en/ukrainian_economy_in_2024/

- The European Commission and EU Member States to ensure that youth-specific components are embedded in all Ukraine recovery instruments (such as the Ukraine Facility), with dedicated support for youth employment, skills development, and entrepreneurship;
- The European Commission and EU Member States to facilitate regular dialogue between Ukrainian youth leaders and key decision-makers, including through high-level meetings, consultations, and youth-led forums focused on Ukraine's recovery and European integration;
- EU institutions to ensure the inclusion of at least several representatives of Ukrainian youth in any working groups, task forces, or international recovery conferences, particularly those shaping Ukraine's future development path;
- The European Commission and EU Member States to support the establishment of a National Youth Participation Platform, enabling young people to engage meaningfully in decision-making at all stages of the recovery;
- The European Commission and the European Parliament to guarantee that youth recovery programs are inclusive, paying special attention to young internally displaced persons (IDPs), youth from temporarily occupied territories, and young veterans — many of whom will return to civilian life with valuable leadership experience and complex reintegration needs;