

Германо-Российская  
молодёжная инициатива



Deutsch-Russische  
Jugendinitiative e.V.

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The German-Russian Youth Initiative DRJUG e.V., as a representative of the youth civil societies in Germany and Russia, strongly condemns the war by the Russian government against Ukraine. Therefore, we demand the immediate withdrawal of foreign forces from Ukraine and the laying down of all weapons by all parties.

We are deeply concerned about the Ukrainian population, especially our members, partners, former participants of our forums, friends and families in the affected areas. "These days we are very concerned about the situation in Ukraine and the people on the ground. At the same time, we are also thinking about Russian people protesting against the war and about the ties with the Russian civil society, which we must not lose," emphasizes Beatrice von Braunschweig, German co-chair of DRJUG e.V. We do not see how a youth exchange can take place in the current situation. For this reason, we are stopping our projects for the time being.

Reconstruction of trustful relations between Russian and Ukrainian people will be difficult. It is the young generation in both countries who will have to work on this task. Furthermore, we are convinced that sustainable peace in Europe can only be achieved together with the Russian civil society, which needs support in democratic transition in their country.

Therefore DRJUG e.V. demands to reopen participation of Russian people in the International Parliamentary Scholarship (IPS) of the German Federal Parliament. This program is a pillar of international understanding which promotes democracy and human rights and gives young people from all over the world valuable experience in these fields. Evidence shows that this program supports young people in their strive for freedom and democracy and encourages them to advance it in their home countries. Therefore, DRJUG e.V. asks the German Federal Parliament to reconsider its decision within the framework of the sanctions package and to enable young people from Russia to participate in the IPS program. We highly welcome and recognize a corresponding decision by DAAD to continue scholarship programs for Russian citizens.

Furthermore, DRJUG e.V. expresses concerns about potential difficulties in obtaining visas or residence permits for Russian people living in Germany. "People with Russian citizenship who study or work in Europe and share democratic values, should not become sufferers of the current situation," emphasizes Mikhail Polianskiy, Russian co-chair of DRJUG e.V. "Many Russian citizens in Germany not only support its everyday economy through their labor, but also represent an important bridge into Russian society. This framework must be guaranteed in order to maintain intercultural understanding and interpersonal relations.

In addition, DRJUG e.V. appeals to maintain town twinning programs with Russian cities. Ultimately, as for other types of cooperation, no exchange can take place in the current situation. But even if these days such exchange projects seem far away, they form an important network of civil society contacts. Exchange projects between local companies, sports clubs and young people in both countries give many people the opportunity to experience and shape international understanding. We must preserve these opportunities of municipal town twinning as a driver for future German-Russian relations.

After all, it is currently most important to stop the war in Ukraine and to protect and support Ukrainian population. Therefore DRJUG e.V. explicitly welcomes the contribution that young people all over the world, especially in Europe and Russia are making towards this goal be it peaceful anti-war demonstrations, donations for humanitarian aid, measures to help refugees or similar important steps. We believe in the power of all people who want to live in peace.

We stand with Ukraine.