



Warendorf, 24 February 2022

## DRJUG Press Release on Peace in Europe

For the first time in the XXI century, the question about peace and war in Europe is back on the table. The spiral of escalation, including the military agenda, continued throughout the last years and, unfortunately, has not been stopped yet. These days, we witness terrible military confrontations in which civilians and ordinary people will become the main victims and those who suffer most. Mikhail Polianskiy, DRJUG's co-chair underlines the importance of a dialogue between the nations: *"We believe in the increased need for neutral platforms to connect not only the decision-makers at the highest level, but also members of civil society."* We, at DRJUG, are convinced that the bilateral German-Russian relations are closely linked to peace in entire Europe, and we must think about it in a multilateral context.

Our Association has for years been working with young generations empowering them to become peace ambassadors and change-makers. We engaged hundreds of young people to build up a new agenda and define the ways to establish peace and trust. *"We believe that youth is an important actor and should not be underestimated as a key figure in finding a sustainable resolution of the conflict"* – emphasizes Beatrice von Braunschweig, DRJUG's co-chair. While political channels of communication were closed, participants of our forums spoke with each other and built bridges of understanding. Bridges that are now in danger. The peace in Europe, achieved so hard in the last century, is getting fragile. Yet, despite all differences and challenges between our nations, there is one common wish that ultimately unites us: **Millions of people want peace.**

When political negotiations stall, civil society, culture, and business must get involved. With growing distrust in governments and media, NGOs must act as stabilizing forces and effective drivers of positive change. We are committed to our goals to settle the crisis and to find a common ground. We, therefore, appeal to the decision-makers in Russia, Ukraine, Germany, and the EU to re-establish the dialogue and engage the entire range of multilateral actors. As the representatives of the international youth civil society, we believe in the power of diplomacy and reject any act of aggression or military measures as a political instrument. In the sake of the current and future generations, we encourage all parties involved, especially those at the forefront of the conflict, to apply maximum efforts and measures towards the de-escalation and a peaceful resolution of the crisis. The young generation is full of hope that our leaders will make the right decision which will allow us to continue our lives in peace and safety together.