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## Open letter on the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh

Dear High Representative Mr Borrell Fontelles,

Dear Commissioner Mr Várhelyi,

We are writing to you as concerned citizens and activists for a peaceful and united Europe. While the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh remained frozen for decades, it has recently erupted with unprecedented violence. For several weeks now, all sides have resorted to brutal action against one another and are taking no measures to spare civilians. Moreover, the conflict is fuelled by Turkey which openly supports Azerbaijan's military operation instead of using its influence to promote peace in the region. Political leadership is needed to stop bloodshed at the EU periphery.

JEF Germany and JEF Europe are non-partisan youth organisations that believe in a united and federal Europe as the only solution to bring about ever-lasting peace on the continent. We therefore strongly condemn this armed conflict and any solution arising from the illegal and indiscriminate use of force.

The European Union is committed to the peaceful containment and resolution of conflicts through multilateral diplomacy. Military confrontation must not be the means of carrying out or resolving conflicts and must be severely condemned accordingly. Armenia and Azerbaijan are part of the Eastern Partnership and are both fellow Member States of the Council of Europe. It is therefore important for the EU - and therefore for you - to work towards resolving conflicts in this part of our continent.

We urge you, as representatives of the European Union, to (1) ensure the EU speaks with one voice on this matter, (2) ensure that the EU becomes the global actor for peace we all want the EU to be by (3) bringing the adversaries to the negotiating table - within the framework of the Minsk peace talks or under another umbrella - and playing a mediating role in the peace process. Reconciliation with a long-term solution to the conflict should be the goal of this policy.

We also insist that all possible means remain on the table, including the possibility of imposing sanctions on the participants in the conflict and Turkey. We believe such measures could persuade all parties to engage in a peaceful dialogue and cease all hostilities, especially against civilians.

Lastly, we are ever more convinced that in order to meet the challenges of our times, the EU must be more capable of employing timely preventive diplomacy. The unanimity requirement within the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy must be replaced by a system of qualified majority voting to allow the EU to react effectively to international crises. Only this way can the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy act as an advocate for the European position and complete their function at the international level.

The EU needs ambitious and brave political leadership to promote its peaceful cooperation model and values abroad. As European citizens, we count on you to take on this role.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

**Clara Föllner**

President, JEF Germany

**Leonie Martin**

President, JEF Europe