

***Support for Peace and Human Rights in Armenia  
and Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh***  
*Justice and Peace Europe has addressed lead candidates for EP elections*

*The Catholic Justice and Peace Europe network has requested lead candidates for the European elections to support a strong engagement of the European Union with Armenia and Armenian refugees and internally displaced persons from Nagorno-Karabakh over the next European political cycle.*

In recent weeks, the Co-Presidents of Justice and Peace Europe, Maria Hammershoy and Mgr Antoine Hérouard have written letters to the lead candidates of several parties for the European elections regarding the critical situation of Armenia and Armenian refugees and internally displaced persons from Nagorno-Karabakh. They asked for a strong engagement of the European Union with Armenia and Armenian refugees and internally displaced persons from Nagorno-Karabakh over the next European political cycle, which will start with the elections set for June 6-9, 2024.

In their opinion, the European Union should exert pressure on both sides, and especially on Azerbaijan, to resolve all outstanding issues exclusively through negotiations and peaceful means in full respect of each country's sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as international law, and to refrain from the use of violence. The EU should insist on the implementation of all relevant decisions and recommendations of the International Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights related to the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Furthermore, the EU should offer constant and reliable humanitarian aid to about 150,000 forcibly displaced Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh and internally displaced persons of Armenia, including 38,000 children and 25,000 elderly, who were forced to leave their communities as a result of Azerbaijan's actions: the 2020 war, the post-2020 war intermittent incursions on Armenia territory, the nine month-long blockade in 2023 of Nagorno-Karabakh, and finally, the unprovoked full-scale attack of September 2023. All displaced Armenians should be allowed to safely return to their homeland Nagorno-Karabakh.

The Co-presidents also asked that the EU insists on an UNESCO-led mission of independent international and local experts on the state of ancient sites of Christian faith in Nagorno-Karabakh; and that it launches a special initiative to safeguard cultural and religious heritage in Nagorno-Karabakh. The mandate of the EU monitoring mission in Armenia should be extended to authorising the monitoring of human rights violations (to life, security, property, freedom of movement, dignity, water and sanitation, and other rights) of the bordering population of Armenia by the presence and actions of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces.

*Justice and Peace Europe* is a network of more than thirty national commissions across the continent. Most of them are active in countries belonging to the European Union, some of them outside. All of them work on request of their national Catholic bishops' conference and on the basis of the Social Teaching of the Church in areas related to global peace and international social justice, the respect for human rights and the care for the planet.

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