

Call for projects: SEE Special Fund 2025 (South-Eastern Europe)

Nationalist ambitions and the questioning of the Dayton-Paris Agreements, along with Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine and its consequences, clearly show that democratic progress and peace in Europe remain fragile. Southeastern European countries, which are still undergoing transformation, face influence from outside forces. Right-wing and left-wing populist movements in Europe and around the world threaten democracy and the rule of law. At the same time, climate change is one of the main concerns of young people. Other important issues include corruption, which leads to distrust in institutions. In this context, the Franco-German Youth Office (FGYO) confirms its strong commitment to the future of the younger generation in Europe, and to peace and solidarity. This support is reflected in its 10-year cooperation with the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO).

Since its creation in 1963, the FGYO and its partners have encouraged youth exchanges between France and Germany. However, Franco-German relations are not limited to just these two countries. Trilateral and multinational youth meetings involving young people from France, Germany, and South-East Europe give participants the chance to learn from one another and exchange ideas in a broader international and intercultural setting. These exchanges support personal, social, and professional development. The skills gained through these projects are not only key to a successful educational and professional path, but also have a positive impact on democracy, human rights, and solidarity. These meetings also help to strengthen civil society in South-East Europe and support the region's integration into the European Union.

Youth exchanges with South-East European countries supported by the FGYO focus on democratic education, helping young people better understand the importance of the rule of law, the separation of powers, and their role in elections, national and European politics, and the European integration process. Peace education, civic education, and youth participation also remain central. Through cross-border mobility projects, young people take an active part in building civil society. They experience diversity, learn to engage in equal and respectful dialogue, and are introduced to democratic processes. They learn to take responsibility and stand up for their rights. In the face of current geopolitical challenges, there is also a need to strengthen humanity and remembrance. Peaceful dialogue, co-existence, regional cooperation, and reconciliation are essential for a united Europe. Special attention is given to the integration of ethnic groups and inclusion. All young people should be able to take part in society and decision-making processes, according to their personality, skills, and interests.

Since 2000, the German Foreign Office and the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs have provided equal funding for this special fund to the FGYO. Trilateral and multilateral projects and the SEE network are also supported by the [SEE regional representative of the FGYO](#).

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1 General scope

1.1 Objectives

In accordance with its Directives, the FGYO supports trilateral and multilateral youth exchange programmes and training courses involving France, Germany and another country. These meetings must be **innovative** and relate to a **current socio-political situation, reinforce European values**, and contribute to **cohesion or integration into the European Union**. They are supposed to support **new educational approaches and methods**, encourage the **active participation of young people**, include **new target groups**, and produce **tangible outcomes**.

1.2 Types of projects

Priority will be given to international youth exchanges with **face-to-face** meetings. In accordance with article 2.5 of the FGYO Directives (in [German](#) or in [French](#)), digital and hybrid encounters are eligible¹.

1.3 Key topics

The projects must deal with at least one of the following key topics. Please read the topics carefully before submitting an application:

A Inspiring enthusiasm for EU integration and European values

- Discuss EU integration through democratisation and reforms in the area of justice, the rule of law, human rights, and the fight against corruption in the EU and in South-East Europe.
- Promote critical thinking about media and social networks to fight disinformation about the EU, ethnic groups, migrants, and to counter the influence of major world powers.
- Support cooperation between EU Member States and South-East Europe on topics like for example migration and security.

B Remembrance work with and for young people

- Question critically nationalist narratives and the instrumentalization of historical events, while encouraging open discussions on differing perceptions of the past
- The Dayton-Paris Peace Agreement: discuss its significance and current challenges, as well as lessons from the past for peace work
- Create innovative and digital ways for reappraising history and protecting cultural heritage

¹ The FGYO provides guidelines and educational material for [general project planning](#) and for [implementing](#) online exchange and training projects in French and German.

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C Promoting Democratic Youth Participation

- Discuss democratic participation processes and develop ideas for all young people to act locally, nationally, or at European level
- Support political participation of minorities, address discrimination and the rights of women, LGBTIQ+ people, and Sinti and Roma communities
- Build networks between young people from EU countries and the Western Balkans to encourage mid- and long-term cooperation

D Protecting the environment and fight climate change

- Address the challenges of climate change while considering differing realities and conditions
- Explore the links between climate change and challenges such as poverty, violence, conflict, corruption, and human rights violations, and highlight anti-democratic and populist disinformation campaigns
- Develop and implement accessible engagement initiatives that enable all young people to contribute to environmental protection

E Supporting vocational training, innovation and young entrepreneurship

- Identify opportunities and challenges that artificial intelligence presents for the labour market, professional integration, and reducing inequalities among youth
- Explore the effects of brain drain and job opportunities on the economy, politics, and society, or reflect on how to support (social) start-ups in areas like new technologies, AI, environment, health, and culture
- Organise encounters with students, trainees, job seekers, and/or young professionals in fields like media and reporting, culture and museums, new technologies and renewable energies, and from the health sector. For example, mental health could be one of the topics addressed in these meetings.

In addition to various methods of non-formal education and international youth exchange, sport, art and culture are also suitable for conveying and presenting content on many topics. With the help of their own methodological approaches, topics can thus be better illustrated, give better access to all young people and new target groups can be won through interdisciplinarity.

2 Criteria for selection and financial support**2.1 Project sponsors and organising team**

Accordingly to the [FGYO Directives](#), project sponsors may be non-profit associations, twinning committees, local or regional authorities, organisations and associations in the sector of non-formal education for children and young adults,

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or stakeholders in culture, science, the media and sport. The project may also be sponsored by schools, universities and vocational training establishments.

Apart from the project sponsor from France or Germany, at least one organisation from another country must be involved on an equal footing in organising and carrying out the project. The involvement of young people in the application process, project development and project implementation is desirable.

For legal reasons, the application can only be submitted by a structure with a registered office based in Germany or France.

2.2 Target groups and participants

The target group consists of young people between the ages of 3 and 30, or 35 years for vocational training projects. This means children, pupils, and young people doing an apprenticeship, in higher education, looking for a job or in employment, as well as stakeholders in the youth sector. Mobility is an offer for all young people and access barriers to exchange should be removed or minimised. Thus, the FGYO particularly encourages the participation of young people who previously had little or no access to exchange programs, such as young refugees or youth with disabilities.²

Gender parity, and the number of participants between the participating countries, should be balanced (preferably one-third each). No more than 70 people, team members included, may participate in the exchange. For further information, including the number of subsidised team members, please refer to the FGYO Directives in [German](#) or in [French](#).

2.3 Project location and duration

In accordance with the FGYO's principle of reciprocity, a project consists of three encounter phases, one in each partner country, each lasting between 4 and 21 nights. The entire project, including all 3 phases, can last between 1 and 3 years. The aim is for participants to commit to the entire project duration with 3 encounter phases. Applications must be submitted for each encounter phase. They are only valid for those project phases that take place in the upcoming funding year from January to December 2026. A set start and finish date must be specified. The meetings may only be held in the participating organisations' countries.

Physical or digital preparatory meetings for purposes of planning the meeting phases for which an application has been submitted are also eligible under this call for projects.

² The FGYO is committed to making its programs as accessible as possible to a wide audience. This is why its guidelines define the concept of "young people with specific needs." This is an administrative term referring to young people who face disadvantages and/or discrimination that make their access to international mobility more difficult or more limited.

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2.4 Further partner country

Encounters with the following countries are eligible for funding: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo³, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia.

Multinational projects involving two or more partner countries from South-East Europe can only be funded if their content and themes clearly justify it. Such projects must be based on a regional geographical and/or historical connection. For example, projects between North Macedonia and Bulgaria, or North Macedonia and Greece, as well as between Croatia and Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo, or Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina could be eligible for support⁴.

2.5 Educational criteria and obligations

Applicants are to present the project's **educational concept** by answering the questions on the application form. They have also to present a **provisional programme** for the face-to-face and /or the digital meeting.

The following aspects must be addressed and will be examined during the project selection process:

- **Intercultural learning:** The project promotes awareness of the topic of intercultural work and knowledge transfer in trilateral groups;
- **Participation:** Young people should be actively involved in designing and carrying out the project and its outcomes;
- **Resonance:** The group should produce a common, concrete outcome⁵ and reach out to people beyond the circle of participants;
- **Environmental and climate protection:** As part of the effort to achieve climate neutrality and environmental protection in youth exchanges, environmentally friendly and climate-conscious meetings are encouraged. You are invited to consult the guidelines for greener international youth projects [in German](#) or [French](#) or refer to some of the United Nations' [17 UN Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#). With the FGYO app [Dekarbo](#), you can calculate and reduce the carbon footprint of your project and sensitise young people to environmental and climate issues!
- **Raising awareness of languages:** Sufficient space should be given to the languages represented in the project. Language animation ([instructions in German and French, possibility to adapt](#)) and group interpreting can help in this regard. English can be used as a language of communication;
- **Communication and visibility:** The project should include a communication strategy for the press and social media; this should also be communicated to the embassies' and consulates' cooperation and cultural

³ The information on Kosovo does not refer to its status. It complies with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 adopted in 1999 and with the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the declaration of independence of Kosovo.

⁴ The participation of Croatia or Greece is only possible within the framework of regional cooperation under the SEE Special Fund.

⁵ E.g. publications, blogs, videos, plays, radio broadcasts, exhibitions, presentations or debates, along with concrete follow-up projects or fresh initiatives.

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action departments as well as municipal and regional institutions. The support of the FGYO is mentioned in it, and the FGYO logo is shown on communication materials. The FGYO [communication kit](#) will also prove useful.

3 Financial support

The FGYO subsidises the projects selected in accordance with its Directives, with the help of funding from the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The grant may amount to a **maximum of € 25,000 per project phase**. The maximum allocation of the grant will be determined based on the duration of the project and the number of participants involved. It is necessary to **contribute** to the grant and/or to seek additional **third-party funding**.

Information on eligible costs for online encounters and hybrid projects can be found in the FGYO Directives in [German](#) or in [French](#).

Following approval of support, 60 % of the grant will be transferred to the project sponsors one month before the project phase begins. The balance will be paid afterwards, once a breakdown of how the funds were used has been received and checked.

4 Submission of applications and selection of the projects

For each project phase (preparatory meetings, phases 1 -3), an application must be submitted by the project leader from Germany or France using the application form in [French](#) or [German](#). The deadline for submissions is **1 November 2025**. Project phases that will take place only in two years' time cannot be submitted until the year before they will be carried out.

The application must be sent **exclusively by e-mail to trilateral@dfjw.org**. The application form must be accompanied by a **preliminary draft of the programme**. This may be supplemented by additional information. Institutions that have never received a FGYO grant before are kindly requested to attach the legal statute of their association. **Incomplete application documents will not be included in the selection process**. The selection of the projects lies with a jury.

All project organiser who submit their application through a **central partner office of the FGYO** undertake to **inform this organisation of their participation in the call for projects beforehand** and to **abide by the current decentralised procedure**.

The 'Regions, Europe and Neighbourhood' unit is organising a web café in French on 16 September 2025 and in German on 18 September 2025 about the content

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of the call for projects and the application procedure. Please register by 12 September 2025 for the web café in [French](#), and for the web café in [German](#).

5 Contact

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