

Call for projects: CEE Special Fund 2027 (Central and Eastern Europe)

In times of global uncertainty, a united and effective Europe is more important than ever. Young people play a crucial role in this: their participation is essential for a democratic future that guarantees the diversity and stability of Europe and its neighbours. Five years after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Franco-German Youth Office (FYGO) and its partners remain committed to strengthening Europe as a unique project of peace and democracy. In the 70th year since the Treaty of Rome, youth exchanges with Central and Eastern Europe contribute to the European cohesion and the trust in democratic institutions, and support initiatives of democratic transformations and the reconstruction in Ukraine and elsewhere. The Lithuanian Presidency of the EU Council in the first half of 2027 provides a special opportunity to address issues such as security, foreign policy and the question of European identity with young people from Germany, France and the Baltic States. Romania and Bulgaria, who have been part of the EU for 20 years, offer, for example, an opportunity to draw conclusions from the integration process and of European identity.

Recent elections give hope in tackling populist and nationalist tendencies. Nevertheless, they highlight more than ever the need for civic education and information on democratic processes, as well as media literacy to understand the current phenomena. The dangers of disinformation in the age of artificial intelligence require particular attention. However, new technologies can also offer opportunities in the fight against polarising and anti-democratic discourses.

Understanding European history is of central importance for social cohesion. This applies in particular to the Second World War, the dictatorships of Eastern Europe, the East-West conflict and the end of the Cold War. Encounters between young people from Germany, France and Central and Eastern Europe create important opportunities for dialogue on an equal footing, the exchange of knowledge and a multi-perspective view of our shared history.

Democracy and the rule of law are linked to diversity, inclusion and fundamental rights of all children and adolescents. The FYGO supports projects by and for young people who are committed to respectful coexistence and who promote equality and diversity. As part of the France-Poland 2027 cultural season and the Leipzig Book Fair, which honours the Weimar Triangle, particular consideration will be given to (artistic) projects involving Poland. These projects may also relate to the future and the role of the Weimar Triangle in reform processes and the enlargement of the EU.

The Central and Eastern Europe Special Fund (CEE Special Fund) is financed in equal parts by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs. The [CEE regional advisors of the FYGO](#) assist in the search for new partners in the region and with cultural and content related questions.

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1 Overall Framework

1.1 Objectives

In accordance with its guidelines, the FGYO supports trilateral and multilateral youth exchange and training courses between France, Germany and another country. These meetings should be **innovative** and have a contemporary **socio-political relevance**; they should **strengthen European values** and contribute to **European cohesion or integration**. They should adopt **new educational approaches and methods**, encourage the **active participation of participants**, involve **new target groups** and produce **concrete results**.

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 guidelines (in [German](#) or in [French](#)), digital and hybrid encounters are also eligible.¹

1.3 Key topics

Projects must address at least one of the following priority themes and focus on one of the sub-themes. Please read these carefully before submitting your application:

A Youth actively engaging for democracy and peace in Europe

- Cover the elections in 2027 in Germany, France, Poland and/or in Slovakia; empower young people to take part in and chair election debates, or to take on the role of election observers
- Strengthening democracy and the rule of law in times of populist tendencies
- Encourage debates about European identity, inform on the EU accession negotiations from different perspectives and explain the associated reforms; to equip young people with the tools to recognise, analyse and highlight change
- Explain security issues and the role of the EU in global affairs
- Highlighting the potential for (cultural) cooperation within the framework of the Weimar Triangle; to this end, a [label](#) dedicated to promoting trilateral projects with Poland has been established by the FGYO and the German-Polish Youth Office (DPJW)

B Understanding history and strengthening mutual comprehension: remembrance work and peace education with young people

- Explore topics such as National Socialism, post-Second World War reconstruction, dictatorships in Eastern Europe or the East-West conflict; visit historical sites and experience local history first-hand

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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- Teaching peace education, mediation and crisis prevention through history and remembrance work
- Teach young people to take a critical approach to misinformation and the exploitation of the past, and sharpening their critical eye when it comes to fake news
- Develop new and innovating methods of remembrance work addressing the differing perceptions of history in Europe, and to examine eyewitness accounts in collaboration with memorial sites

C Promote the participation of all young people and civil society

- Contribute, alongside civil society, to peace, reconstruction and the transformation of Ukraine
- Develop innovative ideas for the reconstruction of (cultural) infrastructure and extracurricular educational programmes
- Highlight minority rights, promote self-determination for everyone (gender equality, LGBTQIA+ rights, ethnic minorities etc.) and present risks and dangers, for example in connection with the manosphere², which may be linked to rising right-wing extremism
- Explain migration and displacement through personal accounts and family histories
- Teach to engage critically with the media and artificial intelligence, to recognise cyberbullying and online crime
- counter challenges facing democratic participation processes, the loss of trust and the lack of prospects among young people, and strengthen resilience and mental health

D Young people's involvement in sustainable development

- Strengthen civil society and develop new partnerships and accessible approaches to taking action, including in relation to consumption and mobility patterns, etc.
- Address the issue of artificial intelligence in the context of climate change; enable young people to develop initiatives for energy saving in the age of new technologies
- Promote environmental protection initiatives in light of the rise of far-right parties
- Address and discuss issues relating to the energy transition, renewable energy and energy security, taking into account the different situations in each country

E Promote vocational training and sustainable young entrepreneurship

- Promote job-specific training and education opportunities to improve access to the labour market, treat the challenges of gender equality in the spheres of education and in the professional world

² The term manosphere refers to communities on social media who address mainly men and who diffuse in general antifeminist and misogynist positions.

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- Share and compare innovative working methods and techniques in the context of emerging technologies and artificial intelligence, with a particular focus on introducing new career fields and employment opportunities in the field of cyber security
- Highlight pathways to self-employment and social entrepreneurship
- Organise trilateral exchanges focusing on skilled trades, professions in the health and social care sectors, digitalisation and new technologies, energy efficiency and conservation, or the management and development of cultural enterprises.

For many topics, sport, art and culture, alongside non-formal education and international youth exchange programmes, are effective ways of conveying and presenting content. These approaches make it possible to explore topics in a more vivid way, create better access for all young people and, thanks to their interdisciplinary nature, attract new target groups.

2 Selection criteria and financial support

2.1 Project organisers and organising team

In accordance with the [FGYO guidelines](#) this call for projects is aimed at charitable associations, town twinning committees, local or regional authorities, organisations and associations involved in non-formal education for young people, and stakeholders from the fields of culture, science, the media and sport. Project organisers may also include schools, universities or vocational colleges.

Apart from the project organiser 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.

For legal reasons, applications may only be submitted by an organisation based in Germany or France.

2.2 Target groups and participants

The target group consists of young people aged between 3 and 30, as well as young professionals and apprentices up to the age of 35. The exchanges are aimed at children, school pupils, apprentices and students, young jobseekers and young professionals, as well as those involved in youth work. The mobility programmes are open to all young people and are designed to be as accessible as possible. The FGYO therefore welcomes the participation of young people who have not yet been able to take part in a mobility programme. This applies, for example, to young refugees or young people with disabilities.³

³ 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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There should be gender parity, and the number of participants from the participating countries should be balanced (ideally one third from each country). A maximum of 70 people can be funded (including the support team). For further details, such as the staff-to-participant ratio, please refer to the FGYO guidelines 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 the same participants to take part throughout the entire duration of the project, which comprises three phases of exchange. Applications must be submitted for each phase of exchange. They are valid only for those project phases taking place during the forthcoming funding year, from January to December 2027. Precise start and end dates must be specified for the purposes of calculating the funding. The exchanges may take place exclusively in the countries of the participating organisations.

Preparatory meetings are also eligible for funding. A separate application must be submitted to the special fund for this purpose.

2.4 Partner countries in Central and Eastern Europe

Projects involving the following countries are eligible for funding: EU Member States (Bulgaria, Estonia, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Hungary) and countries in the EU's Eastern Partnership (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine).⁴

Multilateral projects involving two or more partner countries from Central and Eastern Europe may be funded where there are substantive and thematic grounds for doing so, for example where there is a regional-geographical and/or historical connection. Youth exchanges with countries in other regions, such as countries in South-Eastern Europe, may be funded if they meet the criteria for regional cooperation.

2.5 Educational criteria and requirements

The **educational concept** must be drawn up on the basis of the questions on the application form. The concept must be supplemented by a **provisional programme** for face-to-face meetings and/or digital exchanges.

The following aspects must be included in the project planning and will be taken into account during the project selection process:

⁴ Projects with Belarus and Russia cannot take place at the moment, but associations with active members of the diaspora can be included in order to strengthen democratic values.

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- **Intercultural learning:** Raising awareness of the topic, of intercultural work and knowledge-sharing in trilateral groups;
- **Participation:** Young people should be actively involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of the project;
- **Resonance and impact:** The group should work towards a joint, concrete outcome⁵ and reach out to people beyond the circle of participants.
- **Environmental protection:** In line with the objectives of climate neutrality and environmental protection in youth exchanges, environmentally friendly and climate-conscious exchanges 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 raise young people's awareness of environmental and climate issues!
- **Media literacy:** Teaching key knowledge and tools for the critical use of new media and artificial intelligence, and raising awareness of the advantages and disadvantages, including in relation to differences in access, protection and young people's engagement with these technologies.
- **Raising awareness of linguistic diversity:** 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:** Draw up a communication strategy for the media and social media. This strategy should also include sharing information with partner organisations and the cultural departments of embassies or consulates, as well as with local or regional institutions. The support provided by the FGYO must be acknowledged, and the FGYO logo must be displayed on communication materials. The FGYO [communication kit](#) is available to assist with this.

3 Financial support

The FGYO supports selected projects in accordance with its guidelines and with funding from the Federal Foreign Office and the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs. Funding may amount to a **maximum of €25,000 per project phase**. The maximum grant amount is determined on the basis of the project duration and the number of participants involved. Project organisers may apply for funding to cover the basic costs of an additional programme day if an additional night's accommodation is required during the outward and/or return journey by bus

⁵ These are, for example, publications, blogs, videos, theatre plays or texts, radio contributions, exhibitions, presentations or discussion events as well as concrete follow-up projects or newly founded initiatives.

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or train. **A personal contribution or additional third-party funding is required.**

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

Following approval of support, 60% of the grant will be transferred to the project organiser 1 month before the project phase begins. The remaining amount will be paid out once the required supporting documents have been received and checked.

4 Submission of applications and selection of 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 [German](#) or [French](#). The deadline for submissions is **1 November 2026**. Project phases that will take place only in 2 years' time cannot be submitted until the year before they will be carried out.

Applications must be submitted exclusively **by email to trilateral@ofaj.org**. The application form must be accompanied by a **provisional programme** outline; additional information may be included with the form. Only files in PDF format will be accepted. Organisations that have never received FGYO funding before should please submit their articles of association. **Incomplete application documents cannot be considered in the selection process.** A jury selects the projects.

All project organisers 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 German on 10 September 2026 and in French on 11 September 2026. You will be able to ask questions about the content of the call, the application process and the special fund in general. Please register by 9 September 2026 for the web café [in French](#), and for the web café [in German](#).

5 Contact

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