

Call for projects: SEE Special Fund 2027 (South-Eastern Europe)

Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine and international geopolitical tensions, as well as the rise of populism on both the right and the left are threatening processes of transformation and understanding in South-Eastern Europe. Accession negotiations with the European Union (EU) offer hope for cohesion and peace in Europe. Yet nationalist and Eurosceptic voices are fuelling fears and uncertainties. Young people's expectations regarding the rule of law, a functioning welfare state, education and climate change must be taken into account in political and social action. Distrust of institutions is one of the greatest challenges facing young people in the Western Balkans, Germany and France. In this context, the Franco-German Youth Office (FGYO) reaffirms its commitment to the future of young generations in Europe, to democracy and to mutual understanding. Trilateral and multilateral youth exchanges with South-Eastern Europe offer the opportunity to learn from one another, strengthen civil society and support the European integration process. Civic education is of central importance in this regard: it equips young people with the essential knowledge and tools for active participation in politics and society. The preparations for Podgorica as the European Youth Capital 2028 provide an opportunity to put this into practice and promote empowerment.

In cross-border mobility projects, young people experience diversity and dialogue on an equal footing. A strong emphasis is placed on the inclusion and participation of all young people, who are encouraged to play an active and lasting role in shaping these encounters. Topics such as human rights, respect for ethnic minorities, gender equality and the rights of LGBTQIA+ people, etc., are also discussed collectively.

Peace education and remembrance work are crucial for peaceful cohabitation and respectful dialogues with each other. Young people exchange views on shared history and are thus made aware of different perspectives. The FGYO particularly supports regional cooperation on history and remembrance with a view to coming to terms with the past, transitional justice and reconciliation processes.

Young people in particular from all over Europe are campaigning for greater climate and environmental protection. The heatwaves and forest fires that struck many regions of Europe in the summer of 2026 demonstrated just how severely the effects of climate change threaten the foundations of our way of life. The fight against global warming therefore remains – alongside all other political crises – one of the key challenges facing Europe as a whole and requires joint political action as well as civil society engagement. Through trilateral exchanges, young people learn about a wide range of opportunities for participation and engagement, enabling them to carry out accessible and sustainable projects, take on responsibility and, through dialogue, address injustices in a peaceful manner, thereby standing up for their rights and convictions. In doing so, they acquire important personal and intercultural skills.

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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 advisor of the FGYO](#).

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 Accompany and support the EU-integration with young people

- Carry out projects on EU accession negotiations and discuss various strategies and scenarios relating to integration processes and associated reforms
- Gauge the expectations and fears of all young people regarding EU accession, in order to provide targeted information about EU institutions and offer more concrete ideas that directly benefit citizens (for example: pan-European roaming, inclusion in the SEPA zone, security issues, etc.)
- Address reforms aimed at strengthening the separation of powers, the rule of law, social justice, human rights and the fight against corruption; discuss the aspirations of young people, particularly in connection with the 'Flamingo Movement' in Albania

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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- Promote critical approach to the media, social media and artificial intelligence in order to identify disinformation – for example, in relation to campaigns against the EU or ethnic groups – and to limit the influence of major powers in elections
- Take a nuanced approach to cooperation on migration and foreign policy between EU Member States and countries in South-Eastern Europe

B Strengthen remembrance work for and with young people

- Examine the atrocities of the Second World War and collaboration, the Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s, and the communist dictatorship of Enver Hoxha, with a view to developing a multi-perspective view of our shared history. In this context, the project should, where possible, involve several countries in the Western Balkans.
- Coming to terms with the past through the exchange of experiences and remembrance; discussing forms of transitional justice (war crimes trials, reparations for victims, etc.) in order to come to terms with the past, overcome differences and shape the future
- Scrutinise nationalist discourses and the exploitation of historical events, to encourage open discussions about differing perceptions of the past, and to provide tools to counter these discourses in everyday life with a clear democratic stance
- Illustrate learning processes over the last 30 years and further develop methods of peace education in history and remembrance work; while highlighting thoughts on different experiences of dictatorship or trauma (mental health)
- Develop innovative and/or digital formats for coming to terms with the past and for the protection of cultural heritage

C Promote democratic participation of all young people

- Identify ways so to involve all young people in decision-making processes, for example in shaping local cultural and sporting activities, and through joint discussions on the role of voters and the importance of a free press and media
- Address issues of discrimination and the rights of women, the LGBTQIA+ community and the Sinti and Romani communities
- Build networks between children and Youth councils, climate activists etc. from Germany, France and the Western Balkans, in order to develop medium- or long-term cooperation and reduce mutual ignorance.

D Strengthen environmental protection, tackle climate change

- Promoting initiatives both for young people to infrastructure projects and sustainable urban development
- Address environmental policy and the EU's green agenda as criteria for an EU accession, and the challenges of climate change whilst taking into

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account different realities and circumstances

- Develop ideas for low-threshold engagement that is accessible to all young people and implement environmental protection measures, for example through environmentally friendly travel and tourism concepts in Europe

E Support vocational training, innovation and young entrepreneurship

- Identify opportunities and challenges posed by artificial intelligence and digitalisation for the labour market and vocational integration
- Explore the causes of the labor shortage and "brain drain", and address the emergence of an informal sector as well as its impact on the economy, politics and society
- Discuss concrete measures for the integration of all people (particularly women, migrants and ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities) into the labour market; compare working conditions, protection and labour law in order to highlight prospects for reform
- Illustrate measures for innovative (social) enterprises in the fields of new technologies, artificial intelligence, the environment, health or culture
- Organise meetings with young students, apprentices, jobseekers or those starting their careers in the fields of media and journalism, culture and museums, new technologies and cyber security, renewable energy and energy efficiency, or health

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.

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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.²

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 Southeastern Europe

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

Multilateral projects involving two or more partner countries from Southeastern Europe can only be funded if their content and themes clearly justify it. For example, if there is a regional geographical and/or historical connection between countries

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.

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.

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and if the project contributes to the understanding or to discussions concerning EU membership. Depending on the choice of the theme many combinations are possible, for example

- Projects with North Macedonia and Bulgaria
- With North Macedonia and Greece
- With Croatia, Montenegro or Serbia
- Serbia and Kosovo
- Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Including all six countries of the Western Balkans

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:

- **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 outcome⁴ 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

⁴ 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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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 supports

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 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 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 [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

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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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