DIALOGUES FOR A EUROPEAN FUTURE

10 Years of the South Eastern Europe Initiative of the Franco-German Youth Office (FGYO)

FRANCE

DEUTSCHLAND

Република Македонија
Ish Republika Jugosllave e Maqedonisë
Bosna i Hercegovina / Босна и Херцеговина

Република Србија
Republika Srbija

Република Косовës
Republika Kosovo

Republika Hrvatska

Република Македонија
Ish Republika Jugosllave e Maqedonisë
Bosna i Hercegovina / Босна и Херцеговина

Република Србија
Republika Srbija

Република Косовës
Republika Kosovo

2000

2010
In 1999, following the violent conflicts which shook the territories of the former socialist Republic of Yugoslavia and with a war raging in Kosovo, the Franco-German Youth Office (FGYO) and its partners, under the auspices of UNICEF, mobilized their resources to organize the visit of a group of young circus artists from France, Germany and Slovakia to Kosovan refugee camps in Macedonia. Under the artistic direction of the famous mime artist, Milan Sládek, and in cooperation with the Children’s Theater Center in Skopje, Macedonia, they set out to make the children and young refugees forget for a few moments the horrors of war.

At the 75th Franco-German summit in Mainz on 9th June 2000, the French and German governments commissioned the FGYO to “develop its activity in South Eastern Europe and to reinforce in future its trilateral exchange programmes in this region.” This year the South Eastern Europe Initiative of the FGYO, funded by the French and German ministries of foreign affairs, celebrates its tenth year of existence.

Since the South Eastern Europe Initiative of the FGYO was taken in South Eastern Europe it has fostered dialogue and on-going cooperation between organisations representing civil society in France, Germany and countries of South Eastern Europe. The South Eastern Europe Initiative of the FGYO has supported youth exchanges and trilateral training seminars, associating our two countries with a third country: with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro or Serbia.

Drawing on the lessons learned from Franco-German reconciliation and the tools developed from this cooperation, and taking account of the complexity of the situation in the Balkans, the projects undertaken have contributed to intercultural learning, to regional cooperation and to the development of an awareness of what it is to be a European citizen. They show at the same time that Franco-German relations are not exclusive and that the example of their experience can be shared with other nations as a source of inspiration.

Besides the statistics, with more than 300 projects completed since the year 2000 involving nearly 6,000 participants, the South Eastern Europe Initiative of the FGYO has above all a political mission and represents a human adventure in the service of peace in Europe.

This publication gives an overview of the wealth of activities and the complexity of the experience gained so far. It expresses the FGYO’s gratitude to all the actors involved in this Initiative in South Eastern Europe over the last ten years and to all those who continue to strive for shared democratic values. Finally this publication is meant to encourage new youth organisations to become involved in this Initiative.
At the 75th Franco-German Summit, held 9th June 2000 in Manz, Germany and France asked the Franco-German Youth Office (FGYO) to augment its efforts in South Eastern Europe. For ten years, the German Federal Foreign Office and Quai d’Orsay have financed the tri-national exchange programme carried out by the FGYO in this region – and with great success. The model of Franco-German reconciliation, exchange and cultivation of contacts in a spirit of friendship at all levels of society is bearing fruit in South Eastern Europe.

Only if we build bridges between the countries of Europe and begin a dialogue with one another can we work together to make a useful contribution to a peaceful and free future for our continent. This is particularly true in a region such as the Balkans, marked as it is by social splintering and interethnic tensions.

The South Eastern Europe Initiative of the FGYO strengthens civil society in South Eastern Europe, and in doing so promotes peace and democracy. “Conflict resolution”, “intercultural youth work” and “the environment” are but a few of the topics addressed by these tri-national youth workshops. Only in 2009, nearly 700 participants came together to take part 25 programmes – I think, is an impressive number indeed.

I am pleased that with the South Eastern Europe Initiative of the FGYO the deep friendship between Germany and France – a friendship characterised by a spirit of mutual trust – has over the past ten years given rise to a new dimension of cooperation that recognises the challenges of crossborder dialogue as an opportunity and is successfully contributing to understanding among the peoples of Europe.

Bernard Kouchner
French Minister of Foreign and European Affairs

Dr. Guido Westerwelle
Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs

By inviting the Franco-German Youth Office (the FGYO) in 2000 to promote youth exchanges in South Eastern Europe, Germany and France wished to express their support for the rapprochement of countries in this region with the European Union. After the conflicts of the nineties in the Western Balkans, it was important to think of the future and to count on the new generations to resolve the conflicts of the past.

For more than four decades, the FGYO, more than any other institution, has symbolized Franco-German friendship and our determination to build a common destiny in a united and democratic Europe. It was normal, therefore, and even indispensable to ask it to become involved in this part of the Continent which had suffered so severely and where the scars are still visible both in the landscape of the countries concerned and in the minds of their people.

I should like to congratulate the FGYO for its action, as well as to applaud the participants in the programmes for their commitment to support the values of tolerance and solidarity that bind Europe together.

I should also like to encourage the Franco-German Youth Office to continue with these tri-national exchanges. They benefit young people in the countries concerned as well as renew Franco-German relations. These relations stand for openness to others and form the basis of a stronger and more united Europe.

Dr. Guido Westerwelle
Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs

Bernard Kouchner
French Minister of Foreign and European Affairs

This publication is also available in German and French at the FGYO.
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OFAJ/DFJW - Dialogues for a European Future
The foundations of the South Eastern Europe Initiative of the FGYO 

The foundations for the further development of the South Eastern Europe Initiative of the FGYO were then laid by the Franco-German Summit held 9th June 2000 in Mainz, Germany. The French and German governments invited “the FGYO – to develop its activity in South Eastern Europe and to reinvest in future tri-national exchange programmes in this region as they have already successfully carried out in the partnership with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. – The FGYO can establish a long-term cooperation with its partners in South Eastern Europe in order to support their associations, educational facilities, as well as local youth organizations. This cooperation will contribute in helping the countries of Central and Eastern Europe to develop the democracies, to develop educational infrastructure, to establish local youth organizations, to develop educational facilities, as well as local youth organizations.

Aims of the South Eastern Europe Initiative of the FGYO

Building upon these foundations, the FGYO defined the aims of its Initiative. These aims that have a humanitarian dimension, such as building a South Eastern European society, contributing to peaceful and democratic developments in South Eastern Europe, developing a regional co-operation that allows for the exchange of experiences and methods of potential use to the process of reconciliation in Europe, offering an entire array of concrete instruments, a model but rather a “testing grounds” evolved from history and contemporary developments in France, Germany and the countries of South Eastern Europe.

In particular, the exchange programmes promote a heightened awareness for the importance of the human dimension of Europe, societal development, to strengthen and develop democratic, human rights and good governance, and fighting against xenophobia and totalitarianism, to build a society, contributing to peaceful and democratic developments in South Eastern Europe. At the same time, the exchange programmes encourage participants to move forward to regional cooperation in South Eastern Europe and to provide information about existing methods and valuable experiences of cross-border cooperation between Germany and France in Europe.

Political framework conditions of the exchange programmes

The development of international Franco-German exchange programmes with partner organisations in the Western Balkans is distinguishable in many ways from other tri-national exchange programmes, such as with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe or other EU Member States. A look at the political realities may make clear how difficult the political circumstances are that our partner organisations must confront in their projects.

More than 20 years after the fall of the Wall, 15 years after the signature of the Dayton Accords and ten years after the end of the war in Kosovo, some of the countries in former Yugoslavia are still struggling to overcome the war’s consequences and the animosities in order to advance the establishment of democracy and civil society and improve prospects for their economies. While the war has given reason for hope and individual countries have made progress on the path to a better future under a liberal democratic and constitutional and political reform, the Western Balkan region is still far from a state of normalcy.

Much has been accomplished in the region during the past decade. Since the beginning of the so-called Westernization by the EU, and the subsequent conclusion for Macedonia and Serbia is a major improvement – the kind of peacekeeping measures. The liberalization of visa requirements recently concluded for Macedonia and Serbia is a major improvement – the kind of peacekeeping measures that the Balkans. The development of tri-national Franco-German exchange programmes with partner organisations in the Western Balkans is distinguishable in many ways from other tri-national exchange programmes, such as with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe or other EU Member States. A look at the political realities may make clear how difficult the political circumstances are that our partner organisations must confront in their projects.

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Democracy and civil society – for the most part still fragile entities – are growing at very different rates in the different countries of South Eastern Europe; oftentimes, this process is a difficult struggle between pro-European reformers and strong powers, as well as local youth organizations. This cooperation will contribute in helping the countries of Central and Eastern Europe to develop the democracies, to develop educational infrastructure, to establish local youth organizations, to develop educational facilities, as well as local youth organizations.

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citizenry of the EU as well. Stagnation in the integration process, on the other hand, could bring the strenuous process of democratization in the region to a standstill while strengthening already-powerful ethno-nationalistic forces in the region.

Sustainability and competence of partner organizations

More than anything else, the successful development of the South Eastern Europe Initiative of the FGYO owes to the lasting commitment of our partner organizations in South Eastern Europe, France and Germany. With an exemplary level of commitment, these organizations have – far above and beyond the demands of classic exchange programmes for young citizens – energetically devoted themselves to programmes that, given their political context, pose a considerable challenge for psychological but also methodological and oftentimes logistical considerations.

In all these years, our partner organizations have succeeded in developing mutual trust and a truly European partnership. The FGYO has accompanied this development, occasionally providing active support as well. The annual topic-based development seminars have contributed to the quality and sustainability of these efforts.

At the beginning of the South Eastern Europe Initiative of the FGYO, civil-societal structures on the ground were often characterised by a marked fluctuation in personnel and a subdued profile, but this has since changed noticeably. Many civil-societal organisations work at a high level, both in substantive terms and in terms of their professionalism.

A frequent hurdle to creating solid networks, however, is the precariousness of the financial circumstances of partner organisations in South Eastern Europe. The majority of FGYO partner organisations have no institutional funding whatsoever or are for the most part run by volunteers. If the FGYO has been able to finance such an impressively large number of programmes in the Balkans during recent years, this was especially thanks to the special fund made available to it by the two Foreign Ministries since 2001, and to funding provided by the FGYO itself. Naturally, the participants also pay a fee for their participation in an exchange programme, but this is very limited. Where local support has been obtained, most often it takes the form of contributions in kind and rarely involves financial assistance. Here, new solutions must be found so that the FGYO can work with partners to develop even more programmes in years to come while providing stability and continuity to the partnerships that have been established.

The EU perspective as an engine for civil society

At its meeting in Thessaloniki in 2003, the European Council promised to provide “unequivocal support” to the countries of the Western Balkans and the ten candidate countries. This marked the birth of specific hope, on the part of citizens in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, for membership in the European Union. The prospects of an accession to the EU have become the most important catalyst for internal reforms and regional cooperation in South Eastern Europe. These prospects are also the engine for the creation and strengthening of civil society. This makes it all the more regrettable that information relating to the idea of European Unification, relating to the operation of European Institutions and relating to current debates is frequently dealt with only superficially.

This is why considerably greater significance must attach to the topic of Europe in the exchange programmes as this is a topic that affects young Germans, French, Kosovans, Bosnians, Croatians, Macedonians or Serbians alike: What do we know about one another? What is it that shapes the views we have of one another, what is our notion of cohabitation in Europe, what expectations, hopes and desires do we attach to Europe – a Europe expanded by the addition of South Eastern Europe? As the exchange projects quickly make clear, political questions in South Eastern Europe – such as how minorities are to be treated, the question of the approach to take to history, intercultural competence or the important issue of regional cooperation – are always also issues that concern Europe as a whole.

For the young citizens in the countries of South Eastern Europe, it is critically important to be able to discuss these questions in dialogue with other young Europeans. And something else emerges quite clearly as well: this dialogue is no one-way street. For the youth of French and German, an encounter with the
people and cultures of South Eastern Europe provides an opportunity to discover a richly diverse region, one frequently known to our young citizens only as an area of crisis. At the same time, an encounter with the realities of South Eastern Europe also helps young people see Franco-German relations, Europe and the European Union from a different point of view. One participant wrote: “This is a strange new European mirror that is held up – and it also changes the view we have of ourselves.”

Involvement in the Franco-German dialogue in respect to Europe

The history of Franco-German relations, the long and difficult path – from wars and traditional enmity to close state and civil-societal cooperation and a shared commitment to Europe – is certainly not a model that could be transferred over to the conflicts in South Eastern Europe. The serious differences, in historical, geopolitical, economic and particularly in political terms, are obvious. And yet it is no accident that the Franco-German Youth Office, of all entities, created in 1963 under the Elysée Treaty by French President De Gaulle and German Federal Chancellor Adenauer, has assumed a clear role and mission in rebuilding civil society and in the process of stabilizing democracy in the Balkans.

For this tri-national dialogue with young citizens from France, South Eastern Europe and Germany, the history and the experience of Franco-German relations offer a valuable basis and an inspiration. Nowhere else in Europe can two countries be found that are as culturally distinct as France and Germany are, countries that – despite, and as a consequence of, the stormy history they share – enjoy such a pronounced dialogue or such wide-ranging and profound co-operation in the area of civil society. It is not just politically a good idea but also historically imperative that the experience and the energy that underlie this Franco-German civil-societal co-operation be pressed into service on behalf of the effort to rebuild and strengthen democracy and civil society in South Eastern Europe – which is at the same time the effort to promote a peaceful European integration process.

Frank Morawietz
FGYO Special Commissioner for South Eastern Europe

I congratulate the South Eastern Europe Initiative of the FGYO on the occasion of its 10-year anniversary and extend my best wishes for a continued abundance of interesting encounters and successes in the future, in keeping with the efforts of the Initiative. I have been familiar with the South Eastern Europe initiative since its inception and am proud that it has emerged as an important project partner in South Eastern Europe.

The countries of South Eastern Europe are on the way to membership in the European Union. With its projects, the South Eastern Europe Initiative helps the younger generations who will be living and working in the Europe of tomorrow to find ways to live together, point themselves with other cultures, and benefit from one another’s experiences.

Thanks in part to the diligent work of the Initiative over the past decade, today there is an established network in place among young people from South Eastern Europe, Germany and France. More important still, today the countries of the Balkans are reflecting on the interests they hold in common.

Doris Pack
Member of the European Parliament
Chair of the Committee for Culture and Education, member of the Delegation for Relations with the Countries of South Eastern Europe, substitute member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs

I am pleased to be here on this special occasion to be among you all, to share the joy of receiving this important award, and to be a witness to the success of the South Eastern Europe Initiative. I am proud to have been involved in its development and I am confident that it will continue to contribute to the European integration of the countries in this region.

I would like to extend my congratulations to the South Eastern Europe Initiative on the occasion of its 10-year anniversary. I am grateful for the work that has been done and I wish you all the best for the future.

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In exchange programmes with participants from countries in the former Yugoslavia, war is an inevitable topic. The succeeding wars in Yugoslavia – in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo in the 1990s – have now been over for a little more than a decade, and the material, social and psychological aftermath of war still weighs heavily upon everyday life in the countries of the region. As the wounds of war are still quite present and frequently tied to difficult emotional experiences on the part of the individuals living there, oftentimes participants from South Eastern Europe have a difficult time discussing the events of wartime. At the same time, participants from Germany and France frequently are unaware of how to approach the topic of the war when discussing it in the presence of those affected by it, particularly as they themselves are two or three generations removed from the Second World War and have no wartime experience of their own. Even if the issue of war is not directly a seminar topic, it is still a recurrent subliminal factor during encounters, and sooner or later the question arises: What was the war like? And how present are the consequences of war today?

Germany and France have experience in discussing – or not discussing – difficult events of the past, both within their respective countries and with one another. It took a long time before exchange programmes of the FGYO dedicated themselves directly and self-critically to the memory work. It was only beginning in the 1990s that Franco-German encounter programmes have regularly been held that were devoted to exhaustive discussions of collaboration, resistance, the “Third Reich” and the Second World War. When the South Eastern Europe Initiative of the FGYO was launched in the year 2000, this fact also presented a challenge in terms of the work of remembrance. The aim could not be simply to graft methods developed in Franco-German cooperation to the situation in the Balkans. For one, the wars between Germany and France were of a different character from those in former Yugoslavia, and for another, the temporal and emotional distance to these wars was entirely different for participants from Germany and France, on the one hand, and those from the Western Balkans on the other. Accordingly, the sponsors of the South Eastern Europe Initiative of the FGYO were determined to take a very cautious approach to this issue, to move forward step by step, and above all to attach importance to this sensitive question in the continuing training of its partners.

In 2004, the first training seminar was conducted dealing explicitly with the topic of “War, Recollections of War and Reconciliation” – albeit with a focus on the Franco-German example: the seminar was held in Alsace and featured, among other things, an excursion to the battlefields of Verdun. Still, by way of a detour through the Franco-German experience, participants were given an opportunity productively to address the question of experiences and recollections of war in the Balkans. Following this promising first stage, the sponsors of the South Eastern Europe Initiative of the FGYO decided to take a more direct approach to discussing “Recollections of War in the Balkans” as well, all the while continuing to accord a central role to comparisons with Germany and France.

“War and recollections of war as a challenge for the South Eastern Europe Initiative of the FGYO”

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In 2007, the first Franco-German-Bosnian seminar cycle was held, entitled “Between Remembering and Forgetting: How We Deal with Difficult History in Europe.” Rather than discuss war and the recollection of war in the abstract, “Between Remembering and Forgetting: How We Deal with Difficult History in Europe” aimed to work on the basis of very specific examples in order to ascertain how the memory of war and the remembrance of war can be for all those involved. At the same time, it could be seen how enriching and stimulating confrontations with different sites of memory can be for those who know them well and for those who know them poorly.

This and other seminars revealed, for one, how much learning was still needed among participants – most of them students and young multipliers – in view of the situations in other countries of which they often knew very little, and for another how enriching and stimulating confrontations with different sites of memory can be for all those involved. At the same time, it could be seen how little one could do, in some cases, without knowledge of the other side’s point of view. In this setting, initiatives that wish to deal constructively with this issue rather than polarize it have great difficulties from the other side’s point of view. In this setting, initiatives that wish to deal constructively with this issue rather than polarize it have great difficulties. In this setting, initiatives that wish to deal constructively with this issue rather than polarize it have great difficulties. In this setting, initiatives that wish to deal constructively with this issue rather than polarize it have great difficulties.

The items on the agenda also served to stimulate reflection for the concluding step of the workshop: an “open space” in which participants worked in small groups addressing topics of importance and developing projects for the future. The positive evaluations by participants encourage us to continue to pursue work in this area, to intensify it and to open it up to additional interested parties. This way, we can continue to help build bridges in this sensitive but important area of remembrance between the countries of the EU – Germany and France in particular – and the countries of the Western Balkans.

To promote and develop such cooperative efforts, in June 2010 the FGYO joined with the Centre André Malraux Sarajevo and the Youth Initiative for Human Rights BiH to organize a three-day workshop with 25 representatives of memorials, particularly from their educational-outreach arms, and history organizations in Germany and France. To promote and develop such cooperative efforts, in June 2010 the FGYO joined with the Centre André Malraux Sarajevo and the Youth Initiative for Human Rights BiH to organize a three-day workshop with 25 representatives of memorials, particularly from their educational-outreach arms, and history organizations in Germany and France.

The following year, a similar project was carried out with Croatia and involving the same partners from Germany and France, entitled “Interface History: Towards a European Memory.” In 2011, a seminar cycle was carried out with the other Western Balkan countries, including an exploration of Sarajevo with an eye to the traces of war and war crimes. In this and other seminars, revealed, for one, how much learning was still needed among participants – most of them students and young multipliers – in view of the situations in other countries of which they often know very little, and for another how enriching and stimulating confrontations with different sites of memory can be for all those involved. At the same time, it could be seen how little one could do, in some cases, without knowledge of the other side’s point of view. In this setting, initiatives that wish to deal constructively with this issue rather than polarize it have great difficulties from the other side’s point of view. In this setting, initiatives that wish to deal constructively with this issue rather than polarize it have great difficulties. In this setting, initiatives that wish to deal constructively with this issue rather than polarize it have great difficulties.

Dr. Nicola Moll
Assistant Director, Centre André Malraux Sarajevo
Former Deputy Manager in the FGYO

For more information, visit the OFAJ/DFJW website: www.ofaj.de
Intercultural learning in tri-national youth exchange

To bring about intercultural learning processes and mutual understanding, it is not enough to convene a group of young people at a single location. This is a finding that the FGYO has seen confirmed during the many years in which it has provided scientific monitoring for projects involving encounters between young people from France and Germany. The experience and intercultural methods that have arisen out of these Franco-German encounters have turned out to be valuable guides in the tri-national dialogue with young people from the Balkan countries. They should be viewed not as a model but rather as a kind of “testing grounds” from which to draw conclusions about the history of Europe.

Getting young people from this European region involved in the Franco-German dialogue about a peaceful future for Europe requires thorough preparation. Institutions or organizations wishing to arrange experiences where young people from different countries can meet, first need to communicate and work together to create viable ideas for youth encounters. In addition, the youth leaders or escorts must participate in training and development to help them understand their roles; they need to have experienced intercultural learning themselves before they can assist young people going through this learning process.

The role of the “Intercultural Training and Development” Department at the FGYO is largely to ensure the quality of encounters by initiating, co-ordinating, supporting and assisting with the educational processes involved. During the past 10 years educational concepts have been developed in close co-operation with partner organizations in South-Eastern Europe, France and Germany with the intention of heightening the awareness of young people from different countries to ways of discovering and understanding alternative points of view, values and norms “through someone else’s eyes”. This teamwork takes the form of institutional conferences, topic-oriented seminars for qualified personnel, fact-finding visits, project preparation and training organized each year by the FGYO and its partners. The circle of participating organizations is constantly growing, thanks to conferences and partnership exchanges.

Implementing the aims of the projects requires a great deal of commitment on the part of all those involved, in part because all of the training and development takes place in cycles of 3 phases held in all three countries.

All of the events, particularly the training and development sessions, were characterised by an active process of getting acquainted and dealing with the issues at hand. Networks were created and participants working together developed a wealth of substantive and educational suggestions. Experience, methods and instruments that had proven useful for intercultural learning, democratization and processes of rapprochement and reconciliation in South-Eastern Europe and for Franco-German relations were at the heart of work on a very wide variety of topics, such as: political education and participation, citizen involvement and civil society, environmental protection, the role of the press in a democracy, a Europe of nations, European identity, multiculturalism and interethnic dialogue, educational approaches to history, the memory work, right-wing extremism, aspects of intercultural learning, methods and techniques for intercultural learning, school, university studies, vocational training, and the new media.

Questions of language and communication in general are raised at all of the encounters. The method of language encouragement developed by the FGYO is applied at all of the encounters. This method enables participants to develop an awareness of linguistic diversity while promoting mutual understanding.

Elisabeth Berger
Deputy Manager, Intercultural Training Department, Franco-German Youth Office
These linguistic activities were originally developed for use in Franco-German meetings to familiarize participants with idiomatic French and German through the use of games. In the multilingual context of South Eastern Europe in the year 2000 these linguistic activities appeared on the face of it to be attempting the impossible. Simply adding a third language to a tri-national cocktail could only be fanciful, when one considers the multi-ethnic and multi-lingual nature of the groups of participants from the Western Balkans. It is difficult to imagine for example an intercultural exchange with Macedonians without at least taking account of Macedonian and Albanian among the various languages represented. In a Franco-German, Kosovan seminar five languages could be present among participants: French, German, Albanian, Serbian and Romanian. It was also not beyond the bounds of probability to find representatives of the Ukrainian minority in a Croatian group or the Hungarian minority in a Franco-German, Serb encounter. Moreover, from the very beginning the question of languages used at these tri-national seminars in general and in the language activities in particular took on a political character that would have been naive to ignore.

Following the deadly identity assertions of the 90s, the principle of protecting minorities, required by international law, and the accompanying promotion of peaceful coexistence between different ethnic groups living in the same territory, through the recognition of their language and culture, found their full expression in activities which created a positive dynamic through laughter, a mutual self-confidence essential to the searching questioning and debates that followed and which highlighted the wealth and potential value of the languages used by the different groups taking part.

And so it is that with a great deal of imagination and conviction that my colleagues and I have attempted to adapt and to run language activities in intercultural exchanges set up within the South Eastern Europe Initiative of the FGYO, responding thereby to a tangible reality as well as to the need for equality. In the end is it not more than symbolic for Serb participants to say a few words in Albanian, for Kosovans to say “hello” in Romany or, in another register, for the French and Germans to try out the Cyrillic alphabet?

In any event the pedagogical relevance of the language activities has been proved yet again and has found its place in international programmes involving France, Germany and countries of the Western Balkans.

Garance Thauvin
Trainer

About improbable encounters which, even so, are full of laughter and politics
Or linguistic activities in trilingual exchanges with countries of South Eastern Europe

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Garance Thauvin
Trainer
Quand nous avons demandé aux Croates pourquoi ils souhaitaient rentrer dans l’Union Européenne, ils nous ont immédiatement parlé d’une « garantie pour la paix ». J’ai alors reconstitué une sorte de puzzle. La Seconde guerre mondiale, l’amitié franco-allemande entre les présidents, puis la création de l’OF AJ et sa pérennité. Et aujourd’hui encore quand on ouvre les journaux, en particulier avec la crise grecque et donc la nécessité pour l’Europe de trouver une solution, le « couple franco-allemand » revient comme un leitmotiv.

Tanja (Serbie)
Participant in the tri-national basic training programme for youth leaders among Germany, France and Serbia, 2009-2010

Trening koji sam prosla je bio odlicno iskustvo i jako koristan za moj dalji rad u Kancelariji za mlade. Interkulturalno ucenje i umrezavanje sa mladima iz Evrope je jedan od prvih koraka ka prevazilazenu predrasuda i ostvarivanju dobre saradnje. Drago mi je da sam imala priliku da upoznam Francusku i Nemacku iz jednog drugog ugla, i da sam imala priliku da kolegama iz organizacija iz Francuske i Nemacke predstavim Srbiju i iz ugla omladinskog aktivizma.

Bernard VIALE, former Coordinator at the FGYO
Responsible for the South Eastern Europe Initiative from 2000 to 2008

Grâce aux fonds spéciaux et à l’engagement des associations partenaires, des milliers de jeunes et de responsables d’activités de jeunesse investissent aujourd’hui, apprennent, échangent, coopèrent, à retrouver une espoir et une confiance dans l’avenir, à redonner un sens à la coopération franco-allemande.

Largete (Macedoine)
Participant in ‘Intercultural Europe in Pictures’, a tri-national training programme held in 2010 among Germany, France and Macedonia

I benefited because it was my first time doing exchange with other people so I learnt a lot of things for other cultures and countries… also it will help me in the future to communicate with other people and feel more confidence and to be more free to say my opinion. Thank you for everything… Hope we will have other opportunities to work together…
The ten projects described in the following pages represent a sample of programmes completed by the FGYO and its partners since the setting up of the South Eastern Europe Initiative of the FGYO. They give an overview of the themes covered over the past ten years and could well act as a source of inspiration for setting up new exercises in cooperation. The projects completed between 2000 and 2005 have been listed in “New Bridges for the Balkans”, a documentation published by the FGYO.

The projects completed by partner organisations and the FGYO distinguish themselves by the diversity of the themes they tackle and by the fact that for the most part they are open to all. Over recent years priority has been given to training programmes on how to carry out exchanges and thematic seminars so as to establish qualified teams and develop a network of multipliers. Numerous young youth-organisation representatives and students have taken part in these seminars.

Several examples ongoing 2010 give an overview of the subjects currently proposed and of the audiences’ enlargement.

SHPRESA - Theatre project for refugee children from Kosovo 1999
France - Germany - Slovakia - Macedonia

The first project with Macedonia took place before the setting up of the South Eastern Europe Initiative of the FGYO in 1999. During the war in Kosovo, young artists from France, Germany, Slovakia and Macedonia brought humanitarian aid to the Kosovan refugee camps in Macedonia. Under the direction of Milan Sládek and the auspices of UNICEF and in cooperation with the UNICEF schools set up in the camps, the young artists attempted to make the crowds of Albanian children and adolescents forget for a moment the sad reality of war and deportations with the help of mime and circus arts.

Organizers:
FGYO
Centre National des Arts du Cirque, Châlons-en-Champagne
Gustav-Stresemann-Institut - GSI, Bonn
Theater Arena, Bratislava
Children’s Theater Center - CTC, Skopje

OSAJ/DFJW - Dialogues for a European Future

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Training cycle for trainers of international exchanges 2002-2003
France - Germany - Bosnia-Herzegovina - Kosovo - Macedonia - Serbia
Berlin, Dubrovnik, Skopje
In the course of the three phases of this series, international youth workers and project coordinators from France, Germany, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo exchanged views on the political, national, social and cultural realities of the countries they represented. The young multipliers worked on themes concerning identity, intercultural learning and shared their ideas and methods for organizing future exchanges.

Organizers:
FOYO
Peuple et Culture - PEC, Paris
Interkulturelles Netzwerk e.V., Berlin
Centre for Balkan Cooperation "LQSA", Tetovo
Children's Theater Center - CTC, Skopje
“*A question of point of view*” – Intercultural theatre workshop 2003-2004
France - Germany - Macedonia
Skopje
Through the use of theatre and information-sharing on their country, participants in this training exercise learned how to get to know each other and to learn more about the other through theatre. A play was prepared as a joint exercise. In Skopje, the play’s performance on intercultural learning took place as part of the Franco-German Week. In Paris, the play, taken from Ismail Kadare’s work "Palace of dreams", was directed by Vladimir Milcin and performed in the presence of the famous Ecole Cours Florent, a theatre-training establishment, in the presence of France’s Minister for Culture, and was performed in the presence of the French and German Ambassadors to France.

Organizers:
Peuple et Culture - PEC, Paris
Nationaltheater, Weimar
The University of Skopje
Children’s Theater Center - CTC, Skopje

Radio squared 2004-2005
France - Germany - Bosnia-Herzegovina
Erfurt, Sarajevo, Skopje
Most of the participants in this project were students of various subjects involved in local radio projects. The following were the four angles of the "square" in which they worked together: CTV, article writing, the political dimension of the media and of radio, intercultural encounters, partnerships and networking. Overall, it led to common quality standards in journalism. The theme of war and of the guilt associated with conflicts occupied an important place in the seminars. For each phase, participants working together in tri-lingual teams, produced a radio programme broadcast by the radio stations involved.

Organizers:
Délégués du Ministère de la Jeunesse, des Sports et de la Cohésion Sociale
Haute-Vienne et Limousin - DRJCS Haute-Vienne et Limousin, Limoges
Radio station Freier Rundfunk Erfurt
Radio station Fra-Mer-Rade, Sarajevo
International Studenti Radio Education Frequent Modulation, Sarajevo

Network for Trainers of Tri-national Exchanges 2002-2003
France - Germany - Croatia
Carcassonne, Bochum, Sarajevo
Participants in this training exercise discussed and reflected on the following issues: How does one approach the question of collective identities? What tools are needed to tackle popular heritage, history, national myths and their legacies? How does one actively approach one’s own identity as opposed to somebody else’s? What use can be made of personal stories and patterns of life, and how can one use surveys and interviews carried out in an intercultural encounter? How can one get to know other people and shape one’s own" image of the world? How can communities share their views and experiences and how can these be used to build new alliances and extend the space of freedom? The final result from the work of the various work groups took the form of an exhibition and of a book containing each group’s findings.

Organizers:
Peuple et Culture - PEC, Paris
Jugendbildungsstätte Blossin e.V.
Theatre and videos as work tools for youth activities 2007
France - Germany - Croatia
Marseille, Berlin, Tetovo
The aim of this project was to reflect on the extent to which theatre and videos enable different peoples of cultures and youth to work together. It involved filmed theatre games and above all discussions, deliberations, personal choices. The final result from the work of the various work groups took the form of video clips and slides.

Organizers:
Peuple et Culture - PEC, Paris
Jugendbildungsstätte Blossin e.V.
OIA, Sarajevo

Children’s Theater Center - CTC, Skopje
Interkulturelles Netzwerk e.V., Berlin
Theatre as videos for work tools for youth activities 2007
France - Germany - Macedonia
Berlin, Sarajevo
"Karambolage – On the Trick of Dialogue between Two Cultures and Two Languages" 22nd January 2009
Germany - France - Macedonia
Skopje

How can one breach cultural differences in a differentiated manner, and encourage a free and open dialogue about these differences, without producing new stereotypes and prejudices? These and other questions were the focus of the discussion event with Claire Doutriaux, author of the book "Karambolage" hosted by the FGYO in conjunction with the German Embassy, French Embassy and the "LOJA" Center for Balkan Cooperation in the Macedonian capital Skopje on the occasion of Franco-German Youth Day. In a country like Macedonia, where efforts are ongoing to overcome interethnic tensions at home step by step, these questions are forever topical.

Claire Doutriaux discussed with young people how to familiarize one’s own culture affectionately, with a wink and a connoisseur’s eye. She started her presentation with the example of the French King Louis XIV, who had the nickname "Louis le Grand" (Louis the Great). In a differentiated manner, she then asked the young people a series of questions which one can use to get to know neighbors with the peculiarities of one’s own culture affectionately, with a wink and a connoisseur’s eye.

The German Ambassador, Ms Ulrike Knotz, and the French Ambassador, Mr Bernard Valero, opened up the discussion event. In their opening remarks, they recalled the signing of the Elysée Treaty in 1963, which constitutes the basis for the close co-operation between Germany and France. At the same time, 30 young people from Germany, France and Macedonia presented their impressions of the divided city of Mitrovica with publisher and politician Veton Surroi, with representatives of the "Youth Initiative for Human Rights" (organiziers: OFAJ/DFJW - Dialogues for a European Future, Saarländisches Kulturinstitut Aachen, Centre culturel européen Blaye, Europahaus Dubrovnik).

The journalists were impressed by the network of the South Eastern European Institute in Prishtina and the commitment of representatives in politics, civil society, and the university and business communities. This shared commitment could be seen in the podium discussion in Tetovo (Macedonia) on the interethnic situation in Macedonia. Discussion participants came from very different disciplines and included the special envoy of the European Union, the Head of the Delegation of the European Commission to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; Ljubomir Frckovski, Professor for International Law at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje; Odeta Sela, Director of the "Open Society Institute" foundation in Macedonia and Professor on the Faculty of Dramatic Arts at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje; and Vladimir Milcin, Director of the "Center for Balkan Cooperation "LOJA", Tetovo.

To provide information to the public about the South Eastern Europe Initiative of the FGYO and as part of a training project for young multipliers on the topic of "Europe: A Challenge – Visions and Reality", the FGYO invited seven representatives of the media from France and Germany – from "SZ", "FAZ", "Der Spiegel", "Frankfurter Allgemeine" and "Radio France International", accompanied by the Secretary General of the FGYO, Dr. Eva Sabine Kuntz, to a press tour to Kosovo and Macedonia.

The seminar for journalists included an examination of different political aspects of Kosovo and Macedonia that had been discussed in the youth seminar as well. These included, for instance, a visit to the Multinational Task Force South (MNTF S) in Pristina, devoted to an examination of the specific role of the KFOR in Kosovo, and to security aspects of European cooperation, as well as a visit to the "Yugoslav National Army" Museum in Mitrovica. In a discussion with representatives of civil society and political figures in the capital city of Pristina, participants had an opportunity to develop their impressions of the divided city of Mitrovica with publisher and politician Veton Surroi, with representatives of the "Youth Initiative for Human Rights" organizations, and with the anti-corruption NGO Çohu.

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Yannick (France)
Participant in the training programme among Germany, France and Macedonia: ‘Intercultural Learning through Images and Modern Communications Technologies’, 2006

La rencontre avec le groupe allemand et macédonien m’a permis de mieux appréhender la différence et de comprendre que cette différence était une force dans le monde actuel. Échanger, discuter et débattre, mais aussi partager avec des personnes d’horizons différents, ayant une vision propre du monde, a été un élément fort de cette semaine.

Tamara (Serbia)
Participant in the tri-national basic training programme for youth leaders among Germany, France and Serbia, 2009-2010

For me, this three module training was a deliberating experience. It helped me to get free of my interiorised prejudices. It helped me to become proud of my roots and culture. I love other cultures. I loved them always. But today, I love my own too. And for me, that’s the biggest victory!!

Sebastian Maass
Pedagogical Representative of the FGYO, Interkulturelles Netzwerk e.V., Berlin (Germany)

Tatjana JANKOVIĆ, economist, Belgrade (Serbia)

This training programme not only made it possible to acquire the skills of a teamer - it also broadened my horizons. I am more tolerant, more self-confident, more willing to learn - and I see the world through different eyes.

Bujar LUMA, trainer, Center for Balkan Cooperation “LOJA”, Tetovo (Macedonia)

The moment that moved me most was a visit we made to Verdun where we visited the war memorial site. The group was a mix of different nationalities from the Balkans, France and Germany.

The FGYO in SEE has taken the first steps towards a common world space of European values for tomorrow. But it has to make sure it continues along the same course.
Nina GUILLERME, Berlin (Germany)

Participants in the Franco-German -Kosovan- Macedonian tri-national training session in 2009

“Europe, a challenge? Visions and realities”

Participant in the Franco-German -Kosovan- Macedonian tri-national training session 2009, “Europe, a challenge? Visions and realities”

Nina GUILLERME, Berlin (Allemagne)

Participante à la Formation francophone-française-macédonienne trinationale en 2009.

“Europe, un défi ? Visions et réalités”

Participante à la Formation franco-allemande- kosovar-macédonienne trinationale 2009, “Europe, un défi ? Visions et réalités”

Kristina BABIĆ, trainer, Local Democracy Agency, Osijek (Croatia)

The concept of the project that FGYO offered Croatian NGO’s in 2003 was completely new and unique. The same group of eight persons would visit three locations - in France, Germany and Croatia - and, based on their own experience and interactions with hosts and other groups, would have the opportunity to gain new knowledge and skills.

Apart from the facts that I have learned, and all the information and knowledge that has had such a strong influence on my thinking and way of life, as well as changing attitudes in my private life, the very important personal moment in my projects was finding the great coordinators from other countries who helped to smooth over the running of difficult projects, and who even became our friends.

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Frank MORAWIECZ, FGYO-Special Commissioner for South Eastern Europe, Berlin (Germany)

In the ten years in which I have now been working in programmes with South Eastern Europe, in the process of learning a great deal about the Balkans and, through encounters with the region, about Europe as well, there are two things that have made a particularly lasting impression on me: meeting people in the Balkans who have, despite the overwhelming experiences, not lost their hope for a democratic future in Europe and who in specific situations have managed to build mutual trust and genuine European partnership.

Apart from all the facts that I’ve learned, and all the information and knowledge that has had such a strong influence on my thinking and way of life, as well as changing attitudes in my private life, the very important personal moment in my projects was finding the great coordinators from other countries who helped to smooth over the running of difficult projects, and who even became our friends.

Frank MORAWIECE, Sonderbeauftragter des FGYO für Südosteuropa, Berlin (Deutschland)

In den zehn Jahren, in denen ich jetzt in Programmen mit Südosteuropa arbeite, in denen ich viel über den Balkan und über Europa gelernt habe, habe ich zwei Dinge, die mich nachhaltig beeindruckt haben.

Kristina BABIĆ, formator, Lokalni Demokratija Odraslih, Osijek (Hrvatska)

Koncept projekta koji je područje FGYO izradili i u Hrvatskoj 2003. godine je bio potpuno nov i izuzetno jedinstven. Također su sva osam osoba posjetila tri lokacije - u Francuskoj, Njemačkoj i Hrvatskoj, a na osnovu svoje iskustva i interakcija s gostima i drugim grupama dobila su mogućnost stjecanja novih znanja i vještina.

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Frank MORAWIECZ, FGYO-Special Commissioner for South Eastern Europe, Berlin (Germany)

In the ten years in which I have now been working in programmes with South Eastern Europe, in the process of learning a great deal about the Balkans and, through encounters with the region, about Europe as well, there are two things that have made a particularly lasting impression on me: meeting people in the Balkans who have, despite the overwhelming experiences, not lost their hope for a democratic future in Europe and who in specific situations have managed to build mutual trust and genuine European partnership.

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Frank MORAWIEZ, Sonderbeauftragter des OFAJ für Südosteuropa, Berlin (Deutschland)

In den zehn Jahren, in denen ich jetzt in Programmen mit Südosteuropa arbeite, in denen ich viel über den Balkan und über Europa gelernt habe, habe ich zwei Dinge, die mich nachhaltig beeindruckt haben.

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For me, the most motivating factor for working in this field is the feedback I receive from participants as well as the obvious satisfaction they gained from the exchange experience. Most participants in exchange programmes have never had an opportunity to travel abroad before or to meet with their peers and to discuss their work together.

The unique nature of FGYO exchanges is reflected in their approach to linguistic diversity which is very inclusive towards young people who are not linguistically skilled and who would probably be excluded in other exchange programmes.

Milovan SAVIĆ, trainer and programme coordinator of the Volunteers' center of Vojvodina, Novi Sad (Serbia)

For me, the days I spent in the programme were a unique and formative experience that offered me the opportunity to question the familiar and the new, and to discover things the two had in common.

Franziska KINDMANN, student at Friedrich Schiller University of Jena with concentrations in political science, public law and intercultural business communication (Germany)

The conflicts you hear so much about on the radio or on television are suddenly palpable, and anonymous television images become the fates and the stories of real individuals. Even though, as a student, I may not have any direct or decisive influence over specific conflicts, the encounters I had with people from different cultures still gave me the feeling I had gained more openness to and understanding of our mutual needs – needs for freedom, protection and acceptance of ethnic, religious or language groups, along with the needs for self-determination; but most of all a need for a peaceful and respectful co-existence in our Europe.

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Jelena GAKOVIĆ, MA, Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy and Sociology, Faculty of Philosophy, Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

I hold the FGYO tri-lateral training programmes I have attended in 2002, 2003 and 2004 in high regard, for they have provided me with a great learning opportunity and a unique way to meet with young people from other countries in the region at a time when memories of war were still fresh and travelling in the region difficult.

I have continued to be in regular contact with some of the trainers ever since. The training seminars have also been an invaluable opportunity for me as a student to familiarize myself with EU affairs and learn more about the political and cultural background of participants from Germany and France.
Valdete IDRIZI, Director CMB - Community Building, Mitrovica (Kosovo)

This co-operative exercise will contribute to strengthening co-operation and enhancing a common understanding of how important it is for young people to work together and design a common future, a brighter future without hate and divisions.

It was great to see Serbs and Albanians speaking from two different perspectives, North and South and still managing to listen attentively and to respect the feelings of the other side. In addition to this the observations and questions from their German, French and Macedonian peers concerning Mitrovica helped create a safe place for dialogue on sensitive issues such as history and war.

Artan SADIKU, Tetovo (Macedonia)

Participant in the tri-national Franco-German, Kosovan, Macedonian training seminar 2009, ‘Europe, a challenge? Visions and realities’.

The seminars have offered me and many other young people, a forum for discussing ideas and a medium for free intercultural communication. Each of them represents a genuine event after which I have been able to reflect on my social values, my approach to human strengths and weaknesses and my attitudes towards history.

The reconciliation process in the Balkans needs to be challenged at a regional level by taking advantage of the benefits gained by individuals from working with FGYO exchanges. I feel that we have a historic responsibility to take up this opportunity in our region and the support of the FGYO, which has been such a sincere and willing partner, will continue to be very welcome in the future.

Alain GUÉRAUD, Trainer, Regional and Departmental Directorate for Youth, Sport and Social Cohesion - DRJSCS Limousin, Limoges (France)

France-German Youth exchanges have always appeared to me to be a spectacular expression of a reconciliation which never seemed possible. Thousand years were needed to get to this point. In a geographical sense the Balkans are European and historically they have always asked to be considered in this way. But how do you undertake a task shared between France, Germany and the countries of the former Yugoslavia against a backdrop where the France-German example appears to be a landmark reference rather than a model?

Such is the fascinating task we have set ourselves.

Alain GUÉRAUD, Formateur, Direction Régionale de la Jeunesse, des Sports et de la Cohésion Sociale- DRJSCS Limousin, Limoges (France)

Les échanges franco-allemands de jeunes se sont toujours présents comme le plus beau d'une réconciliation qui semblait impossible. 1 000 ans plus tard nous avons atteint les négociations pour un accord. Les Balkans sont d'ailleurs de l'Europe eu égard au plan géographique et historiquement demandés à être considérés de cette manière. Mais comment entreprendre un travail partagé, entre France, Allemagne et les pays de l'ancienne Yougoslavie, dans un paysage où le franco-allemand apparaît comme un repère et non comme un modèle ?

Tel est le défi passionnant que nous nous sommes fixés.
Jean-Luc MENU, Pedagogical Representative, Union Peuple et Culture, Paris (France)

As a FGYO pedagogical representative at the Union Peuple et Culture I have been committed to the development of exchanges with South-East Europe for the FGYO over the last ten years. This commitment is inspired by the founders of Peuple et Culture, by their political convictions, their desire to contribute thereby to the prevention of fresh conflicts and to create better understanding between peoples and cultures and to encourage dialogue between young people.

Jean-Luc MENU, Permanent Pédagogique, Union Peuple et Culture, Paris (France)

En tant que permanent pédagogique de l’OFAJ à l’Union Peuple et Culture, je m’engage depuis maintenant dix ans pour le développement des échanges avec le Sud-Est de l’Europe. Cette volonté d’engagement est née de l’histoire des fondateurs de Peuple et Culture, de leurs convictions politiques, de leur ambition de contribuer ainsi à la prévention de nouveaux conflits, à une meilleure compréhension entre les peuples et les cultures, à favoriser le dialogue entre les jeunes.
A strengthening of exchange measures on questions of vocational training and development

For the South Eastern Europe Initiative of the FGYO, the ten-year jubilee also constitutes a responsibility and a challenge to continue to build upon the quantity and quality of the South Eastern Europe Initiative in the same time strengthening the civil-societal network and, with it, the implementation of exchange programmes for young citizens of Germany, France and South Eastern Europe. The consistent involvement of young people in South Eastern Europe in particular in a peaceful European dialogue is one of the prerequisites for democratisation, development in a spirit of pluralism and, not least, a strengthening of civil-societal structures within the societies of South Eastern Europe. This dialogue helps construct the isolation of young people in South Eastern Europe while strengthening the process of European integration.

In late November/early December 2009 in Berlin, the FGYO joined partner organisations in Germany, France and South Eastern Europe in hosting an evaluation conference dedicated to a discussion of necessary substantive and structural developments. Participants in the partner's fair that followed the conference included not only experienced and longstanding partners of the South Eastern Europe Initiative of the FGYO but also new potential partner organisations from Germany, France and South Eastern Europe. Particular attention was paid to those NGOs from South Eastern Europe that are already involved in efforts to promote regional co-operation in the Balkans.

The results of this conference essentially chart the profile and challenges for the South Eastern Europe Initiative of the FGYO in the years to come: A broadening of programmatic offerings

Political developments in the Balkans also have consequences for the South Eastern Europe Initiative of the FGYO in the years to come: In Croatia, the work of the FGYO and its partner organisations centres around the political conditions specific to each case. The FGYO works together with the different countries and regions of South Eastern Europe to place the emphasis on substantive areas of interest (e.g. Strasbourg/Kehl).

The Slavonia region (Vukovar and Osijek), where the aftermath of the conflict is particularly traumatic, is devoted to the topic of “cross-border co-operation in Europe”, with case studies drawn from Franco-German co-operation in border areas.

To move this process forward, in its teamwork with new partners in South Eastern Europe the FGYO appeals to organisations that are already active in regional exchange programmes or networks. In the exchange programmes of the FGYO, and particularly in professional development programmes for multipliers in youth work, explicit attention is devoted to the topic of “cross-border co-operation in Europe”, with case studies drawn from Franco/German co-operation in border areas (e.g. Strasbourg/Kehl). Programmes focus differently according to the countries of South Eastern Europe.

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A strengthening of exchange measures on questions of vocational training and development

Particularly in the area of meetings programmes dedicated to questions of vocational training and development, the FGYO and its partner organisations have a great deal of competence and experience valuable and useful in South Eastern Europe. For this reason, from this year forward, particular attention is being devoted to encounters with a vocational and career component. Already this year, encounters have been held among young social workers retraining and among young people in the hospitality sector. Similar encounters are planned for other professional groups as well (nurses in nursing services and in tourism).

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In Croatia, the work of the FGYO and its partner organisations centres on the Slavonia region (Vukovar and Osijek), where the aftermath of
the war is still particularly evident. The objective is to further assist in efforts to re-establish civil society in this region, providing added emphasis with regard to topics of European policy, and in future to encourage strengthened cross-border civil-social co-operation with neighbouring Serbia.

In Kosovo, the aim is – particularly following the legal findings of the International Criminal Tribunal in July 2010 – to redouble efforts to encourage dialogue between Serbian and Albanian Kosovars and to help promote dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo. The FGYO also intends to step up its efforts to encourage representatives of minorities in Kosovo to participate in these programmes.

Serbia, and in respect particularly Vojvodina and Southern Serbia, have been a focus of the programmes of the South Eastern European Initiative of the FGYO since 2009. In September 2010 the FGYO joined with partner organisations in Serbia and the Embassies of Germany and France to host a conference in Belgrade targeted at informing Serbian governmental offices and NGOs of the programmes and to further develop the profile of activities with partner organisations in Serbia in order to urge them to enlarge upon the initiative. The FGYO’s general secretary, Mrs Béatrice Angrand, took part in the conference.

In Macedonia, the focus of our activities is upon inter-ethnic dialogue, particularly with young people in the region that surrounds Skopje and Tetovo. Working in conjunction with partner organisations from Macedonia, the FGYO is also developing pilot projects to strengthen regional co-operation and networks.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, in future greater emphasis will be given to projects in rural areas, and to programmatic efforts designed to strengthen civil society and the participation of young people in civil-social and political developments. This is also accompanied by a new initiative in the area of programmes in vocational training.

Frank Morawietz
FGYO Special Commissioner for South Eastern Europe

OFAJ/DFJW - Dialogues for a European Future

Adeline
Participant in the tri-national seminar among Germany, France and Bosnia: ‘What Can I Do? Young People in Society, 2010’

Kur takohesh me nje person per here te pare gjeja e pare te cilen duhet ta shohesh ne te eshte ta shohesh ate si qenje njerezore pastaj cka eshte ai/ajo apo cfare lloj personi eshte ai/ajo... Ishte kenaqesi e vertete t’ju takoja te gjithe juve!

Adeline (France)
Participant in the tri-national seminar among Germany, France, Macedonia and Kosovo entitled ‘Europe: A Challenge? Visions and Realities’, 2009

Ces séminaires m’ont ouvert l’esprit sur des cultures et des pays que je ne connaissais pas ou peu. Ils m’ont permis d’aborder des préjugés et de renforcer ma conscience de devoir poursuivre l’imprégnation d’être ouvert d’esprit et en fait quand on est confronté à une autre culture parfois nos propres réactions nous surprennent, on se rend compte que l’on a encore un long chemin à parcourir pour comprendre «l’autre».

Ardiana
(Kosovo)
Participant in the training programme among Germany, France, Macedonia and Kosovo entitled ‘Europe: A Challenge? Visions and Realities’, 2009

Kur takohesh me nje person per here te pare gjeja e pare te cilen duhet ta shohesh ne te eshte ta shohesh ate si qenje njerezore pastaj cka eshte ai/ajo apo cfare lloj personi eshte ai/ajo... Ishte kenaqesi e vertete t’ju takoja te gjithe juve!
Total number of participants since 2000: 5,750

Number of exchanges since 2000

- France-Germany-Croatia: 59 exchanges
- France-Germany-Bosnia: 59 exchanges
- France-Germany-Kosovo: 41 exchanges
- France-Germany-Serbia: 41 exchanges
- France-Germany-Macedonia: 61 exchanges

Total exchanges: 315
Total partner organisations: 300
The Franco-German Youth Office expresses its sincere thanks to all the partner organizations involved in the South Eastern Europe Initiative of the FGYO, as well as to all those whose commitment and skills have made it possible to carry out a number of high-quality projects:

A) Arabatska asociacija za vjesntvo i demokraciju (Macedonia), www.ambassade-balkans-france.org
Balkan Sunflower, Pristina (Kosovo), www.balkansunflowers.org

B) Balkan Surfhouse, Pristina (Kosovo), www.balkansurfhouse.org
 achieved, as well as community projects, are often the result of mutual and individual effort, and to all those we may have forgotten.

C) Foyer Ruraux, Paris (France), www.fnfr.org

D) Galery de la Jeunesse, Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina), www.ogbh.com.ba

E) Save the Children

F) Internationaler Friedenskreis, Halle (Germany), www.internationale-friedenskreise.de

G) Save the Children

H) Save the Children

I) Save the Children

J) Save the Children

K) Save the Children

L) Save the Children

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4) Save the Children

5) Save the Children

6) Save the Children

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26) Save the Children

27) Save the Children

28) Save the Children
Declaration of the 75th Franco-German summit meeting on South Eastern Europe in Mainz on 9th June 2000

During the Franco-German Summit in Mainz, President Chirac, Prime Minister Jospin and Chancellor Schröder discussed the current situation in the Balkans. They agreed that Germany and France would continue and intensify their common efforts towards safeguarding peace and stability in this region and towards the reconciliation of their inhabitants.

Peacekeeping in South Eastern Europe is still a main task of the European Union, which is already making decisive contributions to the peace missions of the United Nations, NATO and the OSCE as well as to the reconstruction of former Yugoslavia. France and Germany wish to see the European Union assume its leadership role in the framework of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe.

France and Germany are of the opinion that the European Union must adapt a more coherent and powerful policy, accompanied by a firmer strategy for the Balkans. This will be one of the important aims of France during its EU Presidency.

The pursuit of the democratisation of the Western Balkan countries cannot come primarily from outside, but must instead be developed and fortified from within. Germany supports the idea of a summit meeting suggested by France between the European Union and the countries of this region, which are at different levels, the most advanced in their democratic development. This will be an opportunity to assure the countries of this region of European solidarity and to consult with them to ascertain how they can accelerate the process of their democratic and economic reforms.

Germany and France are aware of the lesson they have learned from their history and of the exemplary value of their reconciliation. They are convinced that their model of exchange and friendly contacts on all levels of society can be applied fruitfully to South Eastern Europe.

This new approach can begin in the weeks to come. The first project entitled “A year of peace – Bosnia 2000” will begin already in July 2000 in Bosnia and Herzegovina. 500 young people from France, Germany and all parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina will participate in 15 different meetings throughout the country. Further projects should follow in Montenegro, Albania and Kosovo. The FGJO must establish a long-term cooperation with its partners in South Eastern Europe. This will be an opportunity to assure the countries of this region of European solidarity and to consult with them to ascertain how they can accelerate the process of their democratic and economic reforms.

APPENDIX: Franco-German initiatives in South Eastern Europe

1 - Youth Exchanges

The Franco-German Youth Office (FGJO) has been invited to develop its activity in South Eastern Europe and to reinforce its tri-lateral exchange programmes in this region as it has been successfully carried out in the past with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The current cooperation with Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia deserves to be developed and applied to the other countries of the region.

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2 - Cooperation at the university level

Germany and France want to make the instruments of Franco-German cooperation available to students at universities, professors, researchers and students from South Eastern Europe. This would initially involve incorporating participants from the region as part of training and research residencies that could subsequently be developed into a genuine trilateral cooperation.

Germany and France are aware of the lesson they have learned from their history and of the exemplary value of their reconciliation. They are convinced that their model of exchange and friendly contacts on all levels of society can be applied fruitfully to South Eastern Europe.

Consequently, they have agreed to undertake jointly – within the framework of the European Union policy and with the support of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe – the projects envisaged in the appendix, which focus on further democratisation, economic development and regional co-operation and therefore on the approach towards the European Union.

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6 - Aid for independent media – cooperation in the audiovisual area

French and German partner cities are invited to develop and realize joint cooperation projects for public media in South Eastern Europe. Their partners are invited to support the two projects introduced by Germany and France to expand its tri-national activities into South Eastern Europe, beginning in autumn 2000, the FGYO has begun to initiate and support exchange projects for young people and multipliers of youth work, in cooperation with its partner organisations in civil society in France, Germany, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo-1244, Macedonia and Serbia/Montenegro.

These exchanges, through the development of mutual knowledge and of common action, a commitment to the practice of democratic participation, the conservation of other values, norms and practices and the experience of mobility, within Europe, pursue the following objectives:

- supporting mutual familiarity and comprehension of the plurality of our European heritages;
- developing an awareness of the complexity of our societies on the one hand, and of the differences and common points between and within the various countries and regions on the other;
- promoting intercultural skills in order to promote a positive relationship with others in contexts of all sorts;
- prompting and reinforcing a commitment on the part of young people to become active members of society at the local, national and international levels.

In the context of the establishment of stable partnerships between actors in civil society in the aforementioned countries and regions, we would like to contribute:

- to the construction and reinforcement of civil societies and of democratic structures in South Eastern Europe,
- to the consolidation of civil societies and democratic structures in France and Germany,
- to the construction and reconciliation among France, Germany, the countries and regions of South Eastern Europe, and to their regional co-operation,
- to the process of European integration and to the development of a European identity.

Charta of the South Eastern Europe Initiative of the FGYO

Berlin, 6th December 2003
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