

Call for projects: SEE Special Fund 2024 (South-Eastern Europe)

Since February 2022, the war in Ukraine has shaken the European continent. Meanwhile, several South-Eastern European countries are undergoing a profound transition process, including several candidates for membership of the European Union. Nevertheless, peace in the Western Balkans remains fragile. Tensions between Serbia and Kosovo, Serbia, Croatia as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina, or between Bulgaria and North Macedonia, the Russian attack on Ukraine and its consequences, are having an impact on the region. Nationalism and populism are on the rise, and fears of new crises and conflicts are once again on the agenda.

Since its foundation in 1963, the Franco-German Youth Office (FGYO) has been promoting with his partners youth exchange organisations between Germany and France. Particular attention is paid to trilateral projects that will help to ensure that Europe remains a peace project for future generations. Trilateral youth encounters with participants from Germany, France and a South-Eastern European partner country offer young people the opportunity to exchange and learn from each other in an international and broader intercultural context. They also promote their personal, social and professional development. The competences gained during exchanges are a key to successful education and a career entry. They have a positive impact on democracy, human rights and solidarity.

In transnational mobility projects, young people experience diversity and engage in dialogue at an equal footing while actively shape civil society. The focus of the FGYO-funded youth encounters with the countries of South-Eastern Europe is on civic education, peace education, fundamental rights and the rule of law. Young people learn how to support democratic processes, how to take responsibility and how to get involved in society. In the current geopolitical context, humanity and experiences from reconciliation work need to be strengthened. Peaceful coexistence and regional cooperation between countries are necessary conditions for a united Europe.

As part of its commitment to Europe, the FGYO pays particular attention to cooperation with the countries of the Western Balkans in an effort to support them during their ongoing process of rapprochement and of EU integration. With its South-Eastern Europe Initiative, the FGYO aims to contribute to the success of the peace process. Since 2000, the German and the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs have lent their support to this initiative, providing funding to the FGYO in equal amounts in form of the South-Eastern Europe Special Fund. With this call for projects, the FGYO supports projects with a **pilot character** and a **strong European orientation**.

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1 Overall framework

1.1 Objectives

In accordance with its Directives, the FGYO supports trilateral youth exchange programmes and training courses involving France, Germany and another country. These meetings must be **innovative** and relate to a **current socio-political situation**. The exchanges must also put forward **new teaching approaches and methods**, encourage **participants to become actively involved** and **include new target groups** in order to produce **concrete results**.

1.2 Types of projects

Priority will be given to international youth exchanges with **face-to-face** meetings. Projects can also be proposed in the following formats:

- **Hybrid formats:** The phase of face-to-face meetings with the group is prepared, continued or evaluated online.
- **Digital formats:** Participants in one or more trilateral working groups use digital tools to have discussions in order to work together on a project and produce either specific results for each group or a joint output. The implementation in digital format must be justified and carried out using appropriate methods.
- **Mixed formats:** A meeting with participants from the same country can be held parallel to the digital meeting. Face-to-face meetings with participants from the same country, however, are possible only if they are held in conjunction with an online meeting with all participants from all participating countries. Ideally they should be followed by a phase of trilateral, face-to-face meetings.

The FGYO provides you with **information on guidelines and pedagogical materials in French and German** for planning digital encounter and training projects. However, if you are planning a face-to-face event, please indicate whether it could be carried out digitally in an exceptional case. The promotion of digital education is useful to strengthen mobility for and between young people from Germany, France and South-Eastern Europe.

1.3 Key topics

A change of perspective with regard to different current challenges such as the current political and humanitarian situation, security and stability, European solidarity and the enlargement of the European Union is very welcome in all projects. The projects must tackle at least one of the following main themes:

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A Environmental responsibility and climate protection

Air pollution, drought, forest fires and other consequences of global warming affect the region and endanger the health of the population, restrict freedom rights of young people and impact agriculture, tourism and the social and economic development of the Western Balkans. The FGYO therefore promotes encounters on environmental responsibility, climate protection and sustainable development. Especially appreciated are trinational encounters showing young people professional opportunities or for engagement in the civil society, in the context of climate change.

B Mobilizing the youth for Europe and mastering regional challenges

Being a member of the European Union is an important perspective for several countries in the Western Balkans, requiring democratization processes, internal political stability as well as stability in the field of neighborhood policy. Therefore, the projects must show perspectives for South-Eastern Europe and the European Union to jointly solve cross-border challenges. The EU is a successful model for regional integration. It can serve as a source of inspiration and a point of reference: How can young people from South-Eastern Europe, Germany and France be mobilized for Europe and thus strengthen cross-border cooperation? How can the participation of young people in Germany, France and South-Eastern Europe be strengthened and thus the development of the European peace project?

The educational mission of today: explaining, understanding and questioning the the European Union in the geo-politically complex context of the 21st century. With this call for projects, the FGYO wants to promote projects that help to reduce inequalities and insecurities in South-Eastern Europe towards the EU, promote knowledge about South-Eastern Europe and are dedicated to dialogue between different groups.

C Young people's democratic participation and engagement in civil society

Young people's participation and involvement are indispensable pillars of open societies. The desire to participate in the common welfare and to contribute to stability and security are important concerns of young people, both in the EU member states and in the countries of the Western Balkans.

The encounters funded by the FGYO are intended to provide young people incentives to get involved at the local, national or European level and to network active members of civil society. At the same time, the projects strengthen participation of young people in society – whether in associations, twinning committees, youth councils or trade unions. Young people can thus learn to use political tools, to make their voices heard and to be perceived as equal actors of the present and the future.

The protection of fundamental and freedom rights is also a priority. The DFJW supports projects that contribute to strengthening democracy, human rights and

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good governance. The focus may be on projects that foster young people's trust in democracy and the rule of law.

Special attention is paid to projects that address nationalism, populism, stereotypes or prejudices. This also applies to projects that deal with equal rights for women and men, but also with LGBTQI+ rights, the Sinti community or more generally with the political participation of minorities and the representation of social diversity.

D Vocational training, innovation and entrepreneurship

Opportunities for good education, vocational integration and prospects on the job market are decisive factors for economic prosperity and the common welfare of a society. These opportunities help protect a society from the loss of expertise and talent known as 'brain drain' and its impact on a country's economy, politics and society. This makes high-quality vocational training adapted to the needs of the job market, support for young entrepreneurs and cooperation with diaspora key factors in increasing youth employment.

With its special fund, the FGYO supports meetings between young students or trainees, jobseekers and young professionals from different occupational fields. These can be for example projects between vocational schools on renewable energies, digitalisation or healthcare.

E Youth remembers

Countries of South-Eastern Europe are still marked by starkly divergent opinions regarding their common history. Conflicts over memory are often fuelled by nationalist interpretation and misused for political ends. Historical instrumentalization or denialism jeopardises the peaceful and democratic future of the region. The FGYO therefore supports projects that promote open dialogue or research on different perceptions of the past and that question different traditions of knowledge acquisition and transfer.

The future of remembrance work also emerges in youth exchanges when young people discuss history and remembrance work with each other. With 'work camps' they contribute to the preservation of places steeped in history. Project participants visit such (forgotten) places of remembrance and memorials, dedicate themselves to a non-formal reappraisal of history even in the digital age, secure the preservation of eyewitness testimonies or make the latter digitally accessible to a larger number of people.

Projects that shed light on the denial of genocide, or that analyze the effects of the legal process for convicting war crimes, are formative as well. This is how the identity and history of a country or a region can be considered from a variety of perspectives. Young people should learn how cultural heritage is understood in the

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other participating countries, how people, young people in particular, make it their own, and how cultural heritage is preserved and strengthened.

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

2 Criteria for selection and financial support

2.1 Project sponsors and organizing team

Accordingly to the FGYO Directives, project sponsors may be non-profit associations, twinning committees, local or regional authorities, organisations and associations in the sector of non-formal education for children and young adults, or stakeholders in culture, science, the media and sport. The project may also be sponsored by schools, universities and vocational training establishments.

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

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

2.2 Target groups and participants

The target group consists of young people between the ages of 3 and 30, or 35 years for vocational training projects. Encounters are intended for young people actively involved in civil society. This means children, pupils, and young people doing an apprenticeship, in higher education, looking for a job or in employment, as well as stakeholders in the youth sector. The FGYO particularly encourages the participation of young people who previously had little or no access to exchange programs, such as young refugees.¹

Gender parity, and the number of participants between the participating countries, should be balanced (preferably one-third each). No more than 60 people, caregivers included, may participate in the exchange. For further information, including the number of subsidized leaders, please refer to the [FGYO Directives](#).

¹ Accordingly to the FGYO Directives, these are "young people with special needs". This category is based on the terminology of the European Union. You will find a definition of this group in the FGYO Directives.

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2.3 Project location and duration

Under the FGYO principle of reciprocity, a project consists of three phases of meetings, one phase in each partner country. Each phase consists of between 4 and 21 nights. The overall project, with all three phases, can last for a period of 1 to 3 years. The aim is that participants commit to the whole cycle of the three encounters. Separate applications must be submitted for each phase of the meeting and are valid only for the parts of the cycle taking place within the budget year from January to December 2024. A set start and finish date must be specified for the purpose of calculating the grant. The meetings may only be held in the participating organisations' countries. Physical or digital preparatory meetings for purposes of planning the meeting phases for which an application has been submitted are also eligible under this call for projects.

2.4 Third country

Encounters with the following countries are eligible for funding: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Kosovo², Montenegro and Serbia.

Regional cooperation with two or more partner countries from SEE may only be supported in exceptional cases in which the content and topics involved justify this and require a regional geographical and/or historical reference. For example, projects with North Macedonia and Greece or Bulgaria and with Serbia and Kosovo are possible to support the process of rapprochement between the two countries. Regional cooperation arrangements in the Western Balkans may also include Croatia and/or Slovenia.

2.5 Educational criteria and obligations

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

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

- **Intercultural learning:** The project promotes awareness of the topic of intercultural work and knowledge transfer in trilateral groups;
- **Participation:** Young people should be actively involved in designing and carrying out the project and its outcomes;
- **Resonance:** The group should produce a common, concrete outcome³ and reach out to people beyond the circle of participants;
- **Environmental and climate protection:** Are environmental protection issues taken into account in the encounter, whether in terms of content or

² 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.

³ E.g. publications, blogs, videos, plays, radio broadcasts, exhibitions, presentations or debates, along with concrete follow-up projects or fresh initiatives.

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in the project implementation and organisation itself (e.g. reduction of CO₂ emissions in logistics; promotion of commitment to environmental and climate protection as part of the encounter)? ;

- **Sustainability:** Does the project support one or more of the UN Sustainable Development Goals ([UN Sustainable Development Goals – SDG](#))? ;
- **Critical media use:** Raising awareness of fake news and disinformation, forming critical opinions and obtaining information from different sources;
- **Raising awareness of languages:** Sufficient space should be given to the languages represented in the project. Language animation and group interpreting can help in this regard. English can be used as a language of communication;
- **Communication and visibility:** The project should include a communication strategy for the press and social media; this should also be communicated to the embassies' and consulates' cooperation and cultural action departments as well as municipal and regional institutions. The support of the FGYO is mentioned in it, and the FGYO logo is shown on communication materials. The projects selected will be presented by their organisations in the regional [Facebook group](#). The FGYO [communication kit](#) will also prove useful.

3 Financial support

The FGYO subsidizes the projects selected in accordance with its Directives, with the help of funding from the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE) and the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The grant may amount to a **maximum of € 25,000 per project phase**.

The maximum allocation of the grant will be determined based on the duration of the project and the number of participants involved. It is advisable to **contribute** to the grant and to seek additional **third-party funding**.

In the case of online meetings and hybrid projects, the FGYO can assist with the cost of renting technical or IT equipment or digital tools for a limited duration. Connection costs, fees, limited planning materials and consumables such as office supplies may also be considered as eligible program costs.

In the case of face-to-face and hybrid meetings between participants residing in the same country, travel and accommodation expenses may also be subsidized in accordance with the [FGYO Directives](#).

Capital costs such as the purchase of cameras, video cameras, computers, printers, hard disks, etc., are not eligible for support.

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

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checked. These documents are to be submitted as soon as possible and, at the latest, two months after the end of the project. For projects that take place between 15 November and 31 December 2024, the deadline for presenting the itemised breakdown of expenditure is 15 January 2025.

We would like to point out that the FGYO will update its [Directives](#) on January 1st 2024. We therefore ask you to regularly consult the links provided in order to prepare the provisional budget of your application. The maximum possible funding amount of 25 000 € remains unaffected and will not be increased.

4 Submission of applications and selection of the projects

For each project phase (preparatory meetings, phases 1, 2 and 3), an application must be submitted by the project leader from Germany or France using the [online application form in French](#) or [German](#). The deadline for submissions is **1 November 2023**. Information on additional online meetings may be included in the application. Project phases that will take place only in two years' time cannot be submitted until the year before they will be carried out.

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

All project leaders 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 decentralized procedure**.

The selection of the projects lies with a jury. Projects that are not selected may be put on a waiting list. Projects that are declined may nevertheless be subsidized by one of the competent offices of the FGYO and should submit a grant application in accordance with the FGYO Directives.

The FGYO will offer an online information session in German and in French on the content of the call and on the application form. At the event, you will also be able to ask questions about the special funds.

5 Contact

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