

## Call for projects: CEE Special Fund 2024 (Central and Eastern European countries)

2024 is a crucial year for Europe. In addition to the European Parliament elections, it will be the twentieth anniversary of the accession of eight Central and Eastern European countries (the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia), the fifteenth year of the Eastern Partnership of the European Union (EU) and the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Council of Europe.

In the light of war in Ukraine, Europe must be strengthened as a unique project for peace and democracy. One of the missions of the Franco-German Youth Office (FGYO) is precisely this. Within the framework of trilateral programmes, the FGYO strengthens dialogue at an equal level, supports the exchange of knowledge and experience, and teaches young people intercultural skills in a Europe of diversity. Youth exchange is work for peace and for the future.

As a center of excellence for both governments, the FGYO assists young Europeans in their commitment to democracy, freedom, climate protection and human rights. The knowledge that young people acquire through trilateral exchanges is not only crucial to a successful education and career path, it also strengthens participants in their personal development and contributes towards a strong civil society. Despite the uncertainties in the aftermath of the pandemic and in times of war and climate change, young people "have confidence in European solidarity"<sup>1</sup>. Trilateral projects with partners from Central and Eastern Europe reinforce this confidence in Europe and young people's commitment and participation.

Furthermore, mobility programmes make diversity tangible and **convey the European idea to young people**. The focus is always on political education, democratic participation and peace education. Especially with regard to the European elections, the participation of young people, especially first-time voters, can be addressed and a bridge can be built between commitment, voter participation and future perspectives for Europe, that go hand in hand with demands on institutions. Youth participation in peace processes and their influence on reconstruction is also important.

With the Central and Eastern Europe Special Fund (CEE Special Fund), which is financed in equal parts by the German and the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the FGYO has been active in the region for more than 30 years. Trilateral projects with member states of the European Union (EU) as well as with countries of its Eastern Partnership and the Council of Europe are characterized by their **pilot character** and **strong European orientation**.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dfjw.org/media/jugendstudie-zuruck-in-die-zukunft-kurzfassung.pdf>

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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 or a product**.

### 1.2 Types of projects

Priority should be given to international youth exchanges or training courses for experts in the form of **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 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 Central and Eastern Europe.

### 1.3 Key topics

For all projects, an outlook on the challenges of the war in Ukraine and its consequences in the region is highly desirable. This applies to related issues such as migration and displacement or the growing threat to democracy, freedom and diversity. With regard to the European elections, projects dealing with questions on the European project and solidarity within Europe will also be considered.

The projects must address at least one of the following main themes:

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## **A Europe's future and civic engagement**

The war at the gates of the European Union shows once again that peace, democracy and the rule of law cannot be taken for granted. In some member states, populism, nationalism and fake news are challenging the very concept of the European Union, even though the EU enjoys high recognition as a unique model of successful regional integration. European values should be conveyed to young people and the cohesion between European countries strengthened.

Many questions arise for young people: How can young people shape the future of Europe together? How to promote electoral participation of the young generations? How to limit disinformation and nationalist slogans? What can we learn from the participation of young people in the European elections? Where does European cooperation work and how can cohesion in Europe be strengthened? How to accompany the integration process of the candidate countries and what is the future for strategic partnerships? What is the EU's role in the world and in terms of security issues? What do young Europeans think about a continent where war has returned as a political tool? How can Europe and its functioning be explained to an increasingly diverse society? How can young people get involved in a united Europe, for solidarity, democracy and peace?

## **B Environmental protection and climate change**

The FGYO supports projects on environmental issues. They are intended to highlight how young people deal with and respond to climate-related challenges. The focus will be on promoting renewable energies in Europe, highlighting the energy dependency of individual countries and showing solutions for strengthening energy autonomy in times of war, inflation and general insecurity.

What measures do young people see as necessary and as a priority at European level? What challenges and solutions do they identify in rural and urban areas? How can young people get involved and become active in everyday life? Exchanges on the connection between stability, security, prosperity, environment and health are also eligible.

## **C Strengthening youth and civil society**

Democracy, human rights and freedom of expression are increasingly under threat. This applies to member states of the European institutions (EU and Council of Europe) as well as to their neighbors. The FGYO supports therefore projects that promote civic education, political participation and intercultural learning. In this way, it contributes to processes of democratisation, the protection of human rights and opposes all forms of discrimination. Gender equality, the welfare of children, the rights of LGBTQI+, refugees and minorities play a special role in this context.

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The FGYO aims to foster young people's civic engagement and encourages them to make their voices heard. This supports integration processes and strengthens the participation of young citizens as an indispensable pillar of open societies. Young people are involved in associations, federations, twinning committees, youth councils, trade unions and political parties, and should therefore be recognised as stakeholders now and in the future.

FGYO funded projects may also network with relevant stakeholders in civil society (at local, national or European level) or provide tools for their civic engagement.

#### **D Peace education and remembrance**

Few regions have been shaped by the "century of extremes" as much as Central and Eastern Europe. During the Second World War, the region was heavily affected by violence and genocide. During the Cold War, dictatorial regimes systematically violated human rights, freedom of expression and the right to mobility. We owe the decline of Eastern European dictatorships, and thus the overcoming of the European division, in particular to the Eastern European civil societies.

But history is increasingly being forgotten, instrumentalised or spread as fake news. However, historical mistakes should not and must not be repeated. For this reason, the FGYO supports peace education projects with a focus on history and memory work. Peace education sharpens the change of perspective, looks into the future and opens up new ways of cooperation. The year 2024 marks the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall and is particularly suitable for youth encounters on the effects of the removal of the Iron Curtain. The anniversary of the Normandy landings or the 80th anniversary of the Oradour-sur-Glane massacre as well as other tragical war crimes can also be used to refer to important democratisation processes.

#### **E Vocational Training and sustainable entrepreneurship**

Solid training, fair and dignified work, professional mobility and access to advanced training contribute to economic prosperity, social cohesion and overcoming social and economic inequalities. All these factors are the basis of functioning democratic societies. They are effective tools against nationalist and populist tendencies. For this reason, the FGYO promotes encounters that strengthen vocational training and open up new perspectives for vocational students, young trainees, professionals and job seekers.

The aim here is to facilitate an exchange about working methods, professional integration or self-employment in social and ecological enterprises. The FGYO and its partners already support exchanges in the crafts sector and in social professions, but it also supports project applications in the fields of renewable energies, energy efficiency and sustainability, digitalisation, new technologies and health-care.

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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 methodical 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.<sup>2</sup>

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

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<sup>2</sup> 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

All of the countries in Central and Eastern Europe may apply for project support. These include the EU Member States (Bulgaria, Estonia, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, the Czech Republic and Hungary) as well as some of the EU's Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine). For projects with Ukraine the security situation has to be taken into account.

Regional cooperations (subsidized beyond the three participating countries) are possible only in exceptional cases justified by the content, and require a regional geographical and/or historical reference. Youth meetings are possible with other regions or countries, such as South-Eastern Europe, provided they satisfy the requirements for regional cooperation.

## 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 programme** 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 result 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 in the project implementation and organisation itself (e.g. reduction of

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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 programme 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 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

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between 15<sup>th</sup> of November and 31<sup>th</sup> of December 2024, the deadline for presenting the itemized breakdown of expenditure is 15 January 2025.

**We would like to point out that the FGYO will update its [Directives](#) on January 1<sup>st</sup> 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 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](mailto:trilateral@dfjw.org)**. The application form must be accompanied by a **preliminary draft of the programme**. This may be supplemented by additional information. Institutions that have never received a FGYO grant before are kindly requested to attach the 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 calls 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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