

Call for projects: SEE Special Fund 2023 (South-Eastern Europe)

In 2022, Europe is once again shaken by armed conflicts. This comes as a shock to everyone, because in many places the political, economic and social achievements of Europe are acknowledged and praised, but on the other hand they are often taken for granted. More than 20 years after the end of the war in Kosovo and the uprisings in Albania, the fragility of the processes of reconciliation in the Western Balkans is still noticeable. It will take time for peoples, societies and governments to converge.

In the 60th year of its existence, the FGYO wants to send a signal for peace, stability and security. Since its foundation on the 5th of July 1963, the Franco-German Youth Office (FGYO) has been supporting youth exchange programmes between Germany and France. They are at the heart of the organisation's work and are intended to promote the idea of European integration, mutual understanding and cooperation in a democratic and peaceful Europe. With this in mind, beginning in 1971, the FGYO expanded its programme to include trilateral meetings. In this way, the FGYO wants to help ensure that Europe will remain a peace project for generations to come. The FGYO's trilateral youth programmes take place between France, Germany and another country. These projects give young people an opportunity to interact with their peers in an international and broader cultural context, to get to know each other and to learn from one another. They also help participants map out their future on a personal, societal and professional level. On one hand, the skills newly acquired through these meetings are the key to success in their subsequent training and career. And on the other hand, they have a positive effect on democracy, human rights and solidarity.

In cross-border mobility projects, young people experience diversity and engage in dialogue on an equal footing while actively participating in shaping cooperation in civil society. The focus of FGYO-funded youth meetings with the countries of South-Eastern Europe is on civic education and peace education. There, young people learn to support democratic processes, take responsibility and get involved. These skills help ensure prosperity and peace. In the current geopolitical context in which, in some places, war is once again understood as an allegedly legitimate means of power politics, European and global values must be upheld and strengthened. Peaceful coexistence and regional cooperation between countries are indispensable prerequisites 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 their projects 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 Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs have lent their support to this initiative, providing funding to the FGYO in equal amounts in the form of the SEE Special Fund.

51 rue de l'Amiral-Mouchez
75013 Paris
T: +33 1 40 78 18 18
www.ofaj.org

Molkenmarkt 1
10179 Berlin
T: +49 30 288 757-0
www.dfjw.org

With this call for projects, the FGYO supports projects with a **pilot character** and a **strong European orientation**.

1 Overall framework

1.1 Objectives

In accordance with Article 3.5.6 of its Directives, the FGYO supports trilateral youth exchange programmes and training courses involving France, Germany and a third 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. Nevertheless, the current infection situation must be taken into account at all times. 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 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.

If you are planning digital or hybrid modules, or a digital or hybrid project, the FGYO can assist you with this by providing information about [mechanisms](#), [tools](#) and [teaching materials](#), along with an [explanatory video](#). To refer to these, please follow [this link](#). If a grant application is submitted for a face-to-face project, please indicate whether the project could, if necessary, be carried out in a digital format as well.

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1.3 Main themes

A change of perspective with regard to different current challenges (such as the current political and humanitarian situation, the coronavirus pandemic and its impacts) is very welcome in all projects. The FGYO also welcomes projects that address issues of European solidarity. The projects must tackle at least one of the following main themes:

A Civic education and human rights to strengthen the role of young people and civil society

Young citizens' participation and involvement are an essential pillar of open societies. The desire to share in the common good and contribute to regional integration with a view to the European Union are important concerns of young people, both in the EU Member States and in the countries of the Western Balkans.

The meetings supported by the FGYO are intended to provide young people incentives to get involved at the local, national or European level, and to network as active members of civil society. At the same time, the projects strengthen the participation of young people in society – whether in teams, associations, twinning committees, youth councils or trade unions. This way, young people can learn to use important tools, make their voices heard and be seen as stakeholders in their own right, both now and in the future.

The protection of fundamental rights and freedoms is also a priority. The FGYO supports projects that help bolster democracy, human rights and good governance. The focus may be on projects that foster young people's trust in democracy and the rule of law.

Special attention is devoted to projects that deal with topics such as nationalism and populism, stereotypes and prejudice, since these create a fertile breeding ground for racism and discrimination against religious or non-religious groups or individuals. This includes projects that deal with the rights of minorities, such as the community of the Sinti.

In addition, freedom of expression and speech, gender equality and LGBTIQ+ issues are of great importance.

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B Mobilising for Europe and overcoming regional challenges

The aim is to understand, question and explain the peace project that is the European Union in a geopolitically difficult context. The projects are thus intended to identify prospects for South-Eastern Europe and for the European Union in order to solve cross-border challenges together. So how can we inspire young people from South-Eastern Europe, as well as young people from Germany and France, for Europe and strengthen cooperation? The EU is the world's most successful example of regional integration. It can serve both as a source of inspiration and as a point of reference.

The educational mission of today: to explain, understand and question the peace project that is the European Union in the geopolitically complex context of the 21st century. With this call for projects, the FGYO aims to promote initiatives that point up the prospects for South-Eastern Europe and help to reduce differences in Europe. At the same time, it seeks to find new paths for cooperation and to fill the future of the EU with new ideas and inspirations.

C 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 good 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 social fabric. This makes high-quality vocational training adapted to the needs of the job market, and support for young entrepreneurs, key factors in increasing youth employment.

With the Special Fund, the FGYO supports meetings between young students or trainees, jobseekers and newcomers to the job market from a variety of occupational sectors. Projects between vocational schools can take place with a focus on new occupations and address digital and technological innovations, renewable energy, energy efficiency or healthcare.

D Youth remembers

The Western Balkans are currently marked by starkly divergent opinions regarding their common history. The culture of remembrance is often 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 about different perceptions of the past and that question different traditions of knowledge acquisition and transfer.

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Research results and cultures of remembrance must be examined from different angles. Youth exchange programmes devoted to history and to preserving and passing on collective memory in an innovative way play a valuable role here. 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 analyse 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 thus be considered from a variety of perspectives.

Young people should learn how cultural heritage is understood in the other participating countries, how the populace and young people in particular, make it their own, and how cultural heritage is preserved and strengthened.

E Environmental protection, sustainable development and urban planning

Air pollution regularly makes headlines in the Western Balkans and in the EU. It endangers the health of the populace in the long term. This pollution is the outcome of short-sighted policy. It is economic in nature and may be the result of poor or inadequate urban planning. With this in mind, the FGYO promotes encounters on environmental protection and environmental education. Project topics such as urban planning and the development potential of 'smart cities' are very welcome.

2 Criteria for selection and financial support

2.1 Project sponsors and organising team

The applicants mentioned in Article 4.2.1 and Appendix 8 of the FGYO Directives may act as project sponsors. 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 organising and carrying out the project. The involvement of young people in the application process, project development and project implementation is desirable.

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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 three and 30. Meetings are intended specifically 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 young people with special needs to get involved.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 subsidised leaders, please refer to the [FGYO Directives](#).

2.3 Project location and duration

Under the FGYO principle of reciprocity, a project consists of three phases of meetings. Each phase consists of between four and 21 nights in each partner country. The overall project, with all three phases, can last for a period of 1 to 3 years. 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 2023. 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 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.

¹ Official European Union terminology. You will find a definition of this group on pages 83-85 of the FGYO Directives.

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.

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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:** The participants should be actively involved in designing and carrying out the project and its outcomes;
- **Critical use of the media:** The project raises awareness of fake news and helps them forge their own opinion by asking them to vary their sources of information;
- **Environmental and climate protection:** Are topics of environmental protection taken into account in the content of the meeting or carried out within the framework of project implementation and organisation itself (e.g. reduction of CO₂ emissions in logistics; promotion of commitment to environmental and climate protection within the framework of the meeting)?
- **Sustainability:** Does the project support one or more of the UN Sustainable Development Goals ([UN Sustainable Development Goals – SDG](#))?
- **Outcomes and impact:** The group should produce a concrete outcome³ and reach people outside the circle of participants;
- **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 communication language.
- **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.

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

3 Financial support

The FGYO subsidises the projects selected in accordance with Article 3.5.6 of 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 €20,000 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 subsidised 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 between 15 November and 31 December 2023, the deadline for presenting the itemised breakdown of expenditure is 15 January 2024.

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](#). The deadline for submissions is **1 November 2022**. Information on additional online meetings may be included in the application. Project phases that will take place only in two years' time may not 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 statutes of their association. Incomplete application documents will not be included in the selection process.

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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 decentralised 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 subsidised by one of the competent offices of the FGYO and should submit a grant application in accordance with the FGYO Directives.

5 Contact

Guillaume Ohleyer
'Trilateral Programmes' Project Manager
+33 1 40 78 18 85
trilateral@dfjw.org

51 rue de l'Amiral-Mouchez
75013 Paris
T : +33 1 40 78 18 18
www.ofaj.org

Molkenmarkt 1
10179 Berlin
T: +49 30 288 757-0
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