

Call for projects: CEE Special Fund 2025 (Central and Eastern Europe)

How can the future of Europe be shaped in times of war at the gates of the European Union? What are the prospects for Franco-German and trilateral cooperation and youth exchange after the European Parliament elections? Together with partners from Germany, France and Central and Eastern Europe, we want to strengthen Europe more than ever as a unique project for peace, democracy and solidarity. In Germany, France and Europe, young people are concerned about the future of society, especially in view of climate change and global warming. At the same time, the opening of accession negotiations with Ukraine and Moldova, for example, strengthens European cooperation. Besides this, the desire of the governments in Berlin, Paris and Warsaw to strengthen the Weimar Triangle is a special occasion for youth projects within the framework of the Weimar Triangle, not only in view of the Polish EU Council Presidency in the first half of 2025. Recent ministerial meetings in Weimar format have also highlighted the importance of strengthening cooperation between young people from the three countries. In addition, it is also the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. Reason enough to emphasise the achievements of understanding, cohesion and cooperation and to develop these further with young people.

The Franco-German Youth Office (FGYO) aims to contribute to peace work and the strengthening of democracy. Through trilateral and multilateral exchange, the FGYO promotes dialogue on an equal level, supports the exchange of knowledge and experience, and teaches young people intercultural skills and the ability to think critically in a Europe of diversity. Youth exchange serves political education; it 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 and multilateral 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. In a context marked by war, global warming, racism, anti-Semitism and islamophobia, trilateral projects with partners from Central and Eastern Europe reinforce the confidence in Europe and in politics, and young people's commitment and participation.

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 characterised by their **pilot character** and **strong European orientation**. The [CEE regional advisors of the FGYO](#) support trilateral and multilateral CEE projects, for instance, by assisting in the search for new partners in the region and strengthen them in their work, thus fostering the network in Central and Eastern Europe.

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1 Overall Framework

1.1 Objectives

In accordance with its Directives, the FGYO supports trilateral and multilateral youth exchange programs 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 will be given to international youth exchanges with **face-to-face** meetings. In accordance with article 2.5 of the FGYO Directives (in [German](#) or in [French](#)), digital and hybrid encounters are also eligible.

The FGYO provides you with **information on guidelines and pedagogical materials in [French](#) and [German](#)** for planning digital encounter and training projects.

1.3 Key topics

The projects must address at least one of the following main themes. Please read the topics carefully before submitting an application:

A Striving for Europe and promoting civic engagement

The ongoing war against Ukraine and the attempts to destabilise the European Union show that peace, democracy and understanding between countries cannot be taken for granted. Democratic values are being challenged by nationalist, far-right and racist discourses, and defamed by fake news. It is important to set up forward-looking projects aimed at strengthening cooperation and cohesion in order to cope with these evolutions.

The institutions of the European Union (EU), accession negotiations and cooperation with the countries of the Eastern Partnership should be addressed in trilateral youth encounters. In addition, the FGYO supports projects that consider the role of the EU in the world, security issues or research and societal issues as well as the role of the Franco-German tandem and its cooperation within the Union.

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B Protecting the environment and combating global warming

The FGYO supports projects on environmental issues. They are intended to highlight how young people deal with and respond to climate-related challenges. What measures do young people see as necessary and as a priority at European level? What challenges and solutions do they identify in rural, structural weak and urban areas? What are the options for action? What can our societies learn from each other? How can young people get involved and become active in everyday life at a low threshold? How can they network better with each other? How can they strengthen civil society?

The topic could be adaptation to climate change and health protection in times of global warming and flooding in Europe.

The focus can also be on the energy transition, the promotion of renewable energies and energy security. Projects can shed light on the energy dependency of individual countries and different perspectives on energy policy.

C Educating for peace and remembrance

The 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War and the liberation of the concentration and extermination camps is a special occasion for projects relating to peace education, history and remembrance work. During the Second World War, the region of Central and Eastern Europe was heavily affected by violence and genocide. The camps in this region are European places of remembrance. Today, however, remembrance work often stops at national borders. The number of contemporary witnesses is also dwindling. New and innovative methods of remembrance work are therefore essential.

The FGYO also supports projects that focus on the end of the Eastern European dictatorships and division of Europe. In view of the increasing instrumentalisation of the past and the spread of misinformation, the aim is to convey perspectives from different countries and regions and create new ways of working together. Projects on history and remembrance work, including with reference to crimes against humanity, can be used to promote democratisation processes. A European culture of remembrance is also emerging in youth exchanges.

D Strengthening youth and civil society

The aim is to promote democratisation processes and contribute to the observance of human rights. Protection against discrimination, gender equality, child welfare and the rights of LGBTIQI+, refugees and other minorities, as well as mental health, play a special role here.

The FGYO wants to encourage young people to make their voices heard. The participation of young citizens is an indispensable pillar of open societies. Young people are involved in a variety of ways and should be respected as full players in

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the present and the future. Projects can also bring together members of civil society or provide them with tools to get involved in society.

In view of the experiences of exile of many children and young people who have found their new centre of life in Germany, France and Europe, migration and displacement can be addressed. How can the resilience of young people be promoted and their civic engagement for democracy supported?

E Supporting vocational training and sustainable entrepreneurship

Cross-border conflicts and energy dependency lead to economic insecurity. Prosperity and the overcoming of social and economic inequalities are the basis of democratic societies and effective tools against nationalism and populism. For this reason, the FGYO promotes encounters that strengthen vocational training and access to the labour market, and open up new perspectives for vocational students, young trainees, professionals and job seekers. Mobility programmes help young people to enter the world of work.

One focus is on overcoming discrimination and racism in the world of vocational training and work. The FGYO also supports projects that promote dialogue on working methods, career paths and entrepreneurship as well as adaptation to current social challenges. For example, how can certain professions be reorganised to deal with the effects of climate change?

The FGYO also supports projects in the fields of renewable energies, sustainability, digitalisation, new technologies and healthcare. The nomination of Chemnitz and Nova Gorica as European Capitals of Culture 2025 provides an opportunity for encounters with young professionals from the cultural sector.

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.

2 Criteria for selection and financial support

2.1 Project sponsors and organising 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 organising and

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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 18 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 70 people, caregivers included, may participate in the exchange. For further information, including the number of subsidised leaders, please refer to the FGYO Directives in [German](#) or in [French](#).

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 2025. 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 Other Country

All of the countries in Central and Eastern Europe may apply for project support. These include the EU Member States (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia) as well as some of the EU's Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan,

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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Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine). For projects with Ukraine the security situation has to be taken into account.

Multilateral projects involving more than three countries can only be funded in justified special cases. These include meetings with a regional-geographical and/or historical reference. Youth encounters with other regions and countries, e.g. in South-East Europe, can be funded if they fulfil 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 result² and reach out to people beyond the circle of participants;
- **Environmental and climate protection:** The FGYO strives for climate neutrality and environmental protection in youth exchanges in order to respect the rights of future generations and promotes encounters that are environmentally conscious and climate-sensitive. Are environmental and climate protection taken into account in the design of the encounter, be it in terms of content, pedagogy or in the project implementation and organisation itself (e.g. reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, promotion of commitment to climate neutrality during the encounter)? Does the project support one or more of the [17 UN Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#)? With the FGYO app [Dekarbo](#), you can calculate and reduce the carbon footprint of your project and sensitise young people to environmental and climate issues! Project organisers can also apply for funding for basic costs for an additional programme day if an additional overnight stay is required for the outward and/or return journey by bus or train;
- **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 ([instructions in German and French, possibility to adapt](#)) and group interpreting can help in this regard. English can be used as a language of communication;

² These are, for example, publications, blogs, videos, theatre plays or texts, radio contributions, exhibitions, presentations or discussion events as well as concrete follow-up projects or newly founded initiatives.

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- **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 subsidises 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 necessary to **contribute** to the grant and/or to seek additional **third-party funding**.

Information on eligible costs for online encounters and hybrid projects can be found in the FGYO Directives in [German](#) or in [French](#).

Following approval of support, 60% of the grant will be transferred to the project sponsors 1 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.

4 Submission of applications and selection of projects

For each project phase (preparatory meetings, phases 1 - 3), an application must be submitted by the project leader from Germany or France using the application form in [German](#) or [French](#). The deadline for submissions is **1 November 2024**. Project phases that will take place only in 2 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 attach the legal statute of their association. Incomplete application documents will not be included in the selection process. The selection of the projects lies with a jury.

All project organisers who submit their application through a **central partner office of the FGYO** undertake to **inform** this organisation of their participation in the call for projects beforehand **and to abide by the current decentralised procedure**.

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The 'Regions, Europe and Neighbourhood' unit is organising a web café in French on 16 September 2024 and in German on 17 September 2024 about the content of the call for projects and the application procedure. Please register by 09 September 2024 for the web café in [French](#), and by 10 September for the web café in [German](#).

5 Contact

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