

Call for projects: SEE Special Fund 2025 (South-Eastern Europe)

Russia's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine and its consequences highlight the fragility of peace in Europe. At the same time, it reveals the continuing instability of South-Eastern Europe, where countries are still in the process of transformation and confronted with foreign influence. Nationalism and populism are fuelling fears of new crises. Alongside this, climate change is one of the biggest concerns of young people. To mark the 25th anniversary of its SEE Initiative, the FGYO is supporting exchange projects that help to ensure that Europe remains a project of peace and solidarity for future generations. It also aims to support the civil societies of South-Eastern Europe in the process of integration into the EU.

Since its founding in 1963, the FGYO and its partners have supported youth exchanges between Germany and France. However, Franco-German relations are not exclusive within Europe. Trilateral and multilateral youth exchanges with participants from Germany, France and South-Eastern Europe offer young people the opportunity to exchange ideas and learn from each other in an international and broader intercultural context. The programmes promote their personal, social and professional development. The skills acquired during the exchange are key to a successful education and career and have a positive impact on democracy, human rights and solidarity.

The focus of the youth encounters with the countries of South-Eastern Europe sponsored by the FGYO is on political education, peace education, fundamental rights and the rule of law. In cross-border mobility projects, young people play an active role in shaping civil society. They experience diversity and dialogue on an equal footing in an intercultural environment and are guided towards democratic processes. They learn to take responsibility and get involved. In the current geopolitical context, humanness and experiences from remembrance work should be strengthened. Peaceful coexistence and regional cooperation between countries are essential prerequisites for a united Europe.

Since 2000, the German Federal Foreign Office and the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs have been supporting the SEE Initiative and providing the FGYO with equally shared financial resources in the form of a special fund. The [SEE regional advisors of the FGYO](#) also supports trilateral and multilateral projects and the SEE network. With this call for projects, the FGYO is funding projects of pioneering character. They are characterised by a pro-European perspective.

1 General scope

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**

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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. 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 encounters and training projects.

1.3 Key topics

The projects must deal with at least one of the following key topics. Please read the topics carefully before submitting an application:

A Mobilising young people for EU integration and mastering regional challenges

EU membership is the strategic goal for the countries of the Western Balkans, and Kosovo's membership of the Council of Europe is an important current topic. These accessions require democratisation processes and reforms in the areas of justice, the rule of law and human rights on the one hand and a willingness to cooperate on the other. Trilateral and multilateral youth encounters are intended to strengthen cooperation and exchange between South-Eastern Europe and the EU in order to develop joint solutions to cross-border challenges and involve young people in public debate and decision-making processes.

The aim is to emphasise young people's contributions to democratisation processes and to work with them to overcome prejudices and stereotypes. However, it is also about combating disinformation about the EU and raising awareness about the influence of other major powers. How can Europe be further developed and strengthened together with young people? Projects that contribute to reducing inequalities in South-Eastern Europe in relation to the EU, are dedicated to dialogue between different ethnic groups or, for example, to the integration of young immigrants.

B Youth remembers

2025 is an important year for the work of remembrance. The year will mark the 30th anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide and the Dayton Peace Agreement. The aim is to encourage open discussions on the different perceptions of the past. In South-Eastern Europe, views on our shared history continue to diverge.

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Conflicts of remembrance are often fuelled by nationalist forces for political purposes. Certain historical events are instrumentalised or denied.

Projects that develop sustainable and digital formats for dealing with history together with young people are eligible for funding. The FGYO also supports cooperation between memorial sites and schools. The key question is how places of remembrance or memorials can be made accessible to as many young people as possible from different life situations.

Cultural and artistic youth encounters are also eligible for funding. Young people should experience how cultural heritage is understood in neighbouring countries and how young people appropriate it. How is cultural heritage preserved and taken up by the younger generation?

C Encouraging the democratic participation of young people

Young people's participation and involvement are indispensable pillars of open and democratic 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 equip them with the right skills to do so.

The civic involvement of young people is only possible if their well-being is ensured. The FGYO supports projects that promote healthy lifestyles and address different perspectives on health risks and mental health education.

It also pays particular attention to projects that deal with the political participation of minorities and social diversity. The rights of LGBTQI+ or the Sinti and Roma communities are of particular importance in this respect. The FGYO supports projects that shed light on current debates on gender equality and womens' movements.

D Protecting the environment and combating global warming

Air pollution, droughts, forest fires and other impacts of global warming are already being felt across Europe. They endanger the health of local populations, restrict young people's right to freedom, and affect agriculture, tourism, and social and economic development. For this reason, the FGYO particularly encourages meetings on environmental protection and sustainable development that address the links between climate change and poverty, violence and conflict, and human and children's rights. Participants from Germany, France and South-Eastern Europe are also encouraged to jointly develop ideas for voluntary and professional forms of commitment that appeal to as many young people as possible in different life situations. Trilateral meetings focussing on volunteer work in the context of ecological change are also welcome.

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E Supporting vocational training, innovation and entrepreneurship

The FGYO wants to encourage and enable young people in South-Eastern Europe and the EU member states to set up new and innovative (social) enterprises and promote economic development.

Professional integration and prospects on the labour market can protect against the brain drain and its effects on the economy, politics and society. High-quality vocational training that is adapted to the needs of the labour market and young people, as well as cooperation with the diaspora, are key factors in increasing youth employment.

The FGYO supports encounters between young students or trainees, jobseekers and young professionals from different professions. These can be projects between vocational training establishments on renewable energies, sustainability, digitalisation, healthcare or for example media and news reporting.

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.

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 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. 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. Mobility is an offer for all

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young people and access barriers to exchange should be removed or minimised. Thus, 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, team members included, may participate in the exchange. For further information, including the number of subsidised team members, 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 four 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. The meetings may only be held in the participating organisations' countries.

Face-to-face or remote preparatory meetings for planning the applied-for encounter phases are eligible for funding under this call. For this, a separate application must be submitted for the special fund.

2.4 Further partner country

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

Multilateral projects with two or more partner countries from South-Eastern Europe can only be funded in exceptional cases where there are thematic and content-related justifications. They require a regional geographical and/or historical reference. For example, projects between North Macedonia and Bulgaria or Greece are possible, but also with Serbia and Kosovo or Bosnia-Herzegovina, in order to foster the process of rapprochement between these countries. Regional cooperation in the Western Balkans could also include Croatia and Slovenia.

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.

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 work.

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:** 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;
- **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

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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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 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.

4 Submission of applications and selection of the 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 [French](#) or [German](#). The deadline for submissions is **1 November 2024**. 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 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 organiser 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 '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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