

1 The Franco-German Youth Office (FGYO)

The Franco-German Youth Office (FGYO) is an organisation which serves to foster Franco-German co-operation.

1. Some background

By signing the **Elysée Treaty** on January 22nd, 1963, General De Gaulle, President of the French Republic, and Konrad Adenauer, the Federal Chancellor, laid the foundations of the Franco-German Youth Office. The Intergovernmental Agreement of July 5th, 1963 implemented provisions made under this Treaty of Franco-German co-operation by creating a body known as the “Franco German Youth Office”, to foster relations between French and German young people.

Article 2 (1) of the initial Agreement stipulates that *“The aim of the Office is to tighten the bonds between young people in both countries, to strengthen their mutual understanding and, to this effect, to provoke, encourage and, where necessary, to set up meetings and exchanges between young people”*.

2. Objectives

The FGYO is a centre of expertise for both countries’ governments. It acts as an adviser and intermediary for local and regional authorities, as well as in civil society in France and Germany.

The FGYO addresses all young people from the age of three to thirty: kindergartners, apprentices, young unemployed persons, employees, students or pupils. Furthermore, it takes up current issues which concern young people in both countries, and adapts its offers to the everyday life and needs of young people. It is a unique “laboratory” for transnational projects and European cooperation. Some of the projects of the FGYO are open to third countries, especially in the Balkans and Maghreb. The FGYO wants to pass on the experiences of French-German youth exchange to third countries as reconciliation work.

3. Exchange – the central task

International meetings are the focus of attention of the FGYO-funded programmes. Important criteria are language and reciprocity, i.e. a return meeting takes place. Priority is given to the intercultural learning, which is supposed to be as intensely as possible and accordingly accompanied. In 2016, the FGYO has funded **8,390 exchange meetings**: 5,198 group exchange programmes and 3,192 individual exchange programmes, in which a total of **194,289 young people** took part. Additionally, 19,744 people participated in events organised by the FGYO.

4. A dynamic network

The FGYO works according to the subsidiary principle with more than 7,000 institutions, partners and project agencies. They are the actual players of the education and youth policy and specialists in their respective field of action (schools, vocational colleges, training centres, universities, universities of applied sciences and arts, associations, partnership committees, holiday camps, sports clubs, youth centres and cultural institutions, youth welfare services). Thanks to its partners, the FGYO had a radius of action which covers the whole of France and Germany and reaches all levels of society for decades. The FGYO helps with the preparation and evaluation of exchanges and plays a significant advisory and mediator role.

5. Increasing funds

During the anniversary year 2013, the contributions of the German and French government to the budget of the FGYO have been raised by two million Euros for the first time since its foundation. This means an increase of almost ten percent. Thus the FGYO's **budget** for 2016 was **24.9 million Euros**, made up of equal contributions from the French and German governments. This includes a special fund of 467.318 Euros provided by the two foreign ministries for exchanges with countries in Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe.

6. Organisation

The FGYO is an autonomous international organisation, led by a Board of Governors, currently presided over by **Jean-Michel Blanquer**, French Minister of National Education and **Katarina Barley**, the Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth in Germany. The Steering Committee offers the Board of Governors advice and makes recommendations.

The executive functions of the Board are carried out by the General Secretariat, led by **Béatrice Angrand**, appointed in 2009, and **Markus Ingenlath Ph.D.**, who took up his post in January 2012. In general, the duration of a term is six years each. It can be renewed once and begins time-displaced by three years.

The objectives of the work of the FGYO are based on an orientation report, issued every three years, which is worked out by the General Secretariat of the FGYO, presented by the Steering Committee and passed by the Board of Governors. A new orientation report for the period of 2017 to 2019 has been passed in 2016.

In **2016, more than 8,390 funding applications have been evaluated**. The staff of the FGYO, consisting of 99 employees (on 70 full-time jobs), is working in bi-national teams in three locations, in Paris, where the head office is currently situated, Berlin and a branch in Saarbrücken.

7. Fields of activity¹

Vocational training and university exchanges

An important goal of the work of the FGYO is to improve the employability of young people with the help of intercultural exchange experiences. That is why the acquisition of professional, social and linguistic competences is the focus of attention of the mobility programmes in the field of vocational training and university exchanges. By offering internships, seminars, conferences and mobility programmes, the FGYO enables a large number of young people to continue their education, to gather unique experiences and to lay the foundation of their professional future.

In 2016, 1,673 meetings took place, including 14,907 young people in the field of vocational training and university exchanges: 681 grants for professional internships (individual grants and PRAXES) and 261 grants for work placements; 131 seminars took place in the field of higher education, in which 2,527 students participated. The programme "Work in the partner country" listed 46 participants. 460 programmes including 9,799 participants promoted exchanges between institutions of vocational training and technical education as well as between apprentices at vocational schools. 2,127 young people committed themselves one year in the context of the voluntary service.

School exchanges and extracurricular exchanges

In the school and extracurricular exchanges the FGYO funds predominantly programmes which enable a first contact with the neighbouring country. The traditional group exchange and the individual stay both focus on the discovery of the culture, the joy in learning a language and the examination of another country. It is about motivating young people to participate and to offer inventive and innovative formats.

Concerning school exchange, 2,344 meetings of school classes in the partner country were financed, including 109,307 pupils. 99 meetings took place in a third country, uniting more than 3,947 pupils of secondary schools, and 51 meetings were lead with 1,295 primary school students. 1,653 students took part in individual exchange programs.

In 2016, the FGYO funded 864 extracurricular exchange programs with 23,566 participants. They were led by youth associations, twin town committees, sports clubs, art and cultural associations as well as associations for academic and technical youth welfare work. 111 young persons got a grant for an individual project in the other country.

Learning the partner language

It remains an important task for the FGYO to support language acquisition of children and young people as well as to support multipliers. In 2016, 1,628 young people and adults took part in FGYO-funded school or extracurricular language courses (extensive, intensive, tandem). 4,838 children of the age of three to twelve were introduced to the language in children's courses. 83 teachers and educators spent one year in the other country in order to enable a vivid contact with the language as native speakers.

Pedagogy of intercultural learning

The FGYO wants to ensure and drive forward the quality of the educational work as well as support language promotion in bi- and trilateral meetings.

In 2016, 124 bi- and trilateral trainings of special staff were granted. The topics range from intercultural education, methods of language promotion and teaching to trainings on social issues as well as specific educational concepts of intercultural learning. A total of 2,000 team leaders were trained. 17 advanced trainings for teachers were organised by the FGYO or its partners with the aim of using the potential of a student exchange in a profitable and educationally valuable manner.

To support the quality of the meetings, the FGYO continually develops educational material, which can be used by the organizers during the preparation and the meeting itself.

Communication and events

Topical meetings, organisation of manifestations and events, press and media work, information for young people and multipliers, public relations. In 2016, the FGYO has participated on 44 events and fairs in Germany and France; it has installed 86 info meeting points and has developed an information network of 89 junior ambassadors in Germany and France.

Third country programmes

More than 347 trilateral meetings with over 8,600 young people from Germany, France and 45 third countries; mostly with countries of Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe as well as the Mediterranean.

8. Contact

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ⁱ The statistics referred to are from 06/2016