

## **Bridging Borders between French and German Youth**

The Franco-German Youth Office (FGYO) was created to establish a new friendship between France and Germany, after decades of disagreement. The establishment was created from the Elysée Treaty, signed on January 22, 1963, by French President Charles de Gaulle and German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, which was a cooperation between the youth after World War II (during the Cold War). The main purpose of this treaty was to foster new relationships among the youth and encourage building new relationships as the time it was signed was a period of rivalry and division. The treaty was the foundation for the FYGO, fostering dialogue and to learn from each other's culture between the French and German youth. When it was first established, the FYGO's headquarters were in Rhondorf near Bonn, then moved to West Germany's capital.<sup>1</sup> The organization's demonstration of the two nations viewing each other as equals in a picture from GHDI from October 6, 1964. The picture was taken in Paris where French and German youth were at an international camp completing their task at a German military cemetery. Holding a banner exemplifying the message of the organization captioned, "We want to work together and continue to live in peace".<sup>2</sup> This photograph displays the organization's mission to promote mutual understanding and unity.

The FYGO original founding document is found in records such as the Western European Union Assembly-General Affairs Committee: A Retrospective View of the Political Year in Europe 1963. The organization was mentioned in the meeting's overview of the objectives, since

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<sup>1</sup> "Franco-German Youth Office," Wikipedia, October 31, 2024, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franco-German\\_Youth\\_Office](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franco-German_Youth_Office).

<sup>2</sup> German and French Youth, 1964, in *German History in Documents and Images*, accessed October 29, 2024, <https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/two-germanies-1961-1989/ghdi:image-2464>.

the FYGO is one of the provisions that came from the Elysee Treaty.<sup>3</sup> The document highlights the Franco-German relationship and mentions the importance of the treaty and how establishing a French-German relationship strives towards European integration. The document also mentions that the two countries have the responsibility to guarantee political progress. The urge to rebuild a relationship between France and Germany through efforts such as the Franco-German Youth Office is emphasized in this assembly to collaborate on these current challenges.

The organization has been analyzed through scholarly articles such as why the FYGO was created and its origins. Ulrich Krotz's "Three Eras and Possible Futures: A Long-Term View on the Franco-German Relationship a Century after the First World War" goes through the three phases of the relationship of France and Germany: "hereditary enmity", "reconciliation", and "special relationship". The Franco-German Youth Office is examined in the reconciliation phase, also mentioning European integration. Other online articles of recent analyses of the FYGO including Schulke's article celebrating the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This article particularly reflects from the origins to the organization today, celebrating the huge milestone. The Franco-German Youth Office examinations and interpretations displays its importance as a key element of European integration after World War II. As well as promoting cultural exchange and diplomatic relationships between France and Germany, while living as an example for the current and future youth.

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<sup>3</sup> Corine Defrance and Ulrich Pfeil, "The History of the Franco-German Youth Office," FGYO, accessed October 28, 2024, <https://www.fgyo.org/the-institution/history-franco-german-youth-office>.

### Annotated Bibliography in Chronological Order

- Adenauer, Konrad, and Charles de Gaulle. *Joint Declaration by the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany and the President of the French Republic*. Paris, January 22, 1963. In *Text of the Franco-German Treaty signed in Paris (22nd January 1963)*, published in *Western European Union Assembly-General Affairs Committee: A Retrospective View of the Political Year in Europe 1963*, March 1964, p. 29f.
  - On January 22, 1963, Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and President Charles de Gaulle signed the Joint Declaration in Paris. This document ended centuries-old rivalry and a commitment to cooperation between Germany and France. The treaty paved the way to a partnership of cultural and political collaboration between the two nations. Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and President Charles recognized the youth in part of their friendship, creating the Franco-German friendship and ultimately turning a new lead in this declaration. This effort to establish a treaty of collaboration among the youth of France and Germany to act in on exchanges and to create a long-lasting friendship.
  
- German and French Youth (1964), published in: German History in Documents and Images, <<https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/two-germanies-1961-1989/ghdi:image-2464>> [October 29, 2024].
  - Taken on October 6, 1964, this picture displays French and German youth at a camp in Paris, working together at a military cemetery. The photograph with the banner reading “We want to work together and continue to live in peace”, exhibits the message and goal of the Elysee Treaty. The FYGO gave youth opportunities to exchange in conversation about each other's culture and rebuild a relationship to start a generation of change. This image shows just this, youth participating in a camp, recovering the past and creating a new future.

- Fuchs, Julien. “Europe in construction: the European question for youth movements (1945-1963) - the case of Alsace.” *Histoire@Politique* 10, no. 1 (2010).  
<https://doi.org/10.3917/hp.010.00102>.
  - The French-German youth camps were made to educate the youth through social education with the goal to mend the two countries strained relationship. The article examines Alsace youth diplomacy after World War II and the explanation of youth camps. Alsace, France borders Germany and has a history of a place where French and German youth created a diplomatic relationship. The camps started conversations and activities that promoted European identity, with the main focus of bringing the youth together rather than focusing on the past. The article also mentions the FYGO to date, including details of the funds provided for the Elysee Treaty. The aim was to build trust and respect for one another for this generation of post-war, which carried to today allowing support for projects among the youth.
- Jürgens, Hanco. “Verdrag Houdt Lijnen Open Tussen Berlijn En Parijs.” Duitsland Instituut, January 22, 2013. <https://duitslandinstituut.nl/artikel/2891/verdrag-houdt-lijnen-open-tussen-berlijn-en-parijs>.
  - The Duitsland Instituut article describes how the Élysée Treaty was a starter for communication between the two countries, introducing the Franco-German Youth Office (FGYO). It is also noted in the article the treaty was not just the start of the friendship between the French and Germans, but the end of a strained relationship. The article further describes youth camps which are demonstrated with the same image as the GHDI (German Historical Institute) website. The youth camps that were a part of the FGYO played a role in a cross-border partnership. The article concludes noting the Élysée Treaty is a milestone in history and an important factor in the relationship among the youth all between the two nations.
- Krotz, Ulrich. “Three Eras and Possible Futures: A Long-Term View on the Franco-German Relationship a Century after the First World War.” *International Affairs (Royal*

*Institute of International Affairs 1944-* 90, no. 2 (2014): 337–50.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/24538558>..

- Ulrich Krotz article examines the three phases of the relationship between Germany and France: “hereditary enmity” (1871-1945), “reconciliation” (1945-1963), and “special relationship” (1963-present). The article breaks down key points of the two countries' relationship including the stakes of the present, examining the root cause of the conflict. Krotz explains President Charles de Gaulle and Chancellor Konrad Adenauer recognized the importance of mending France and Germany’s relationship, which led to the creation and signing of the Elysee Treaty during the reconciliation period. He highlights the significance of bridging the gap between the nations and the importance of maintain a strong friendship. Krotz explores the treaty’s role in repairing relations between France and Germany, discussing its impact and what it signifies for the future and the ongoing challenges.
- Jobs, Richard Ivan. “Journeys of Reconciliation .” Essay. In *Backpack Ambassadors: How Youth Travel Integrated Europe*, 66–102. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2018.
  - In “Journeys of Reconciliation” in the book *Backpack Ambassadors* analyzes the post-war relations across the borders through sources of reports of youth of allied countries, archival research, and secondary sources. Youth travel allowed dialogue between young French and Germans, permitting cultural exchanges and breaking years of rivalry. The exchanges among the youth would consist of traveling to the other’s home country, visiting universities, or staying with a French or German family. The main goal was the German youth to understand other European cultures, while having young people of the West to accept the Germans as peers. Youth diplomacy travel was the beginning of a unified European identity, creating long lasting partnership to today.
- Ministère de l’Europe et des Affaires étrangères. “Elysée Treaty.” France Diplomacy - Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, January 2023.

<https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/germany/france-and-germany/elysee-treaty/#:~:text=civil%20society%20initiatives,-.The%20Treaty%20also%20created%20the%20French%2DGerman%20Youth%20Office.,exchanges%20and%20reciprocal%20language%20learning.>

- In the article of the Élysée Treaty on the France Diplomacy website, the article addresses questions regarding the treaty and the youth diplomacy of the two countries. The article draws information from Franco-German Youth Office and historical records as well as referencing the treaty's goals. It notes 2023 was the 60th anniversary of the treaty, which symbolizes the support of European integration. As a result of the treaty, the FGYO was to create a bond between the youth and to have diplomatic conversation. Nine million youth have taken part in 320,000 exchange programs, creating lasting bonds between young French and Germans. This article answers clarifying questions regarding what the Élysée Treaty did for the two countries, laying the foundation for the Franco-German Youth Organization.
- Schülke, Sophia, ed. "Ceremony in Berlin: Franco-German Youth Office Celebrates Its 60th Birthday." *Saarbrücken Zeitung*. June 26, 2023.
  - The German newspaper Saarbrücken Zeitung reflects on the FGYO 60th anniversary in 2023 and its impact and how the youth are coming together today. Since the foundation, it has organized around 400,000 exchange programs and is currently running an environmental project with the Franco-German Climate Run. These efforts not only uphold the main goal of what created the FGYO, but also together help to make progress in the world around us through climate change efforts. Additionally, the article emphasizes the current projects among the youth demonstrate the organization and the bond still holds to today, continuing to a commitment of European integration sixty years later.

- “The Franco-German Youth Office (FGYO).” The Franco-German Youth Office (FGYO) | Chemins de mémoire. Accessed October 29, 2024.  
<https://www.cheminsdememoire.gouv.fr/en/franco-german-youth-office-fgyo>.
- This interview with Anne Tallineau and Tobias Bütow the French and German general secretary of the FGYO answers questions of the start and impact of the FGYO to today. Some of the questions that are answered are the roles of French general secretary Anne Tallineau and German general secretary Tobias Bütow, if the French and Germans still have the same relationship, and the impact of this organization. This interview gives insight from the past and present of the Franco-German Youth Office such as through the history and remembrance, impact beyond borders, and the French and German youth relationship. This also emphasizes on its foundational role in building cross-cultural dialogue youth engagement since 1963, and its evolving efforts to address modern societal challenges while promoting European solidarity.