

French History Competition 2023/2024

"Societies in Motion: Sports Between France and Germany"

2024 was the year of two gigantic sport events: With the Men's European Football Championship being hosted in Germany and the Olympic Games about to start in France, both countries of the Franco-German history competition looked forward to great achievements and celebrations. But while much of Europe was still rooting for their favourite football team, another – much smaller, but nevertheless long awaited – celebration took place: the award ceremony of the EUSTORY France History Competition. With "Societies on the move: Sport between France and Germany" organisers chose a fitting topic for 2024.



Winners of the EUSTORY France Competition together with Anke Rehlinger, Minister-President of Saarland | Photo: Staatskanzlei Saarland, [CC BY NC DN 2.0](#)

On 28 June, students, parents and tutors travelled to Saarbrücken, capital of the Saarland on the border to France. They were received by Anke Rehlinger, Minister-President of the Saarland and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Republic of Germany for Cultural Affairs, at the state chancellery. In her speech, Ms Rehlinger reflected on the well-fitting research topic: “The fantastic entries to the Franco-German history competition show us just how much sport has shaped and strengthened Franco-German relations in the past. They are also a great incentive for us to continue to cultivate joint sporting activities with commitment and enjoyment in the future – whether on an Olympic scale or at regional level!”



Moderators asked participants to share details about their research

Photo: Staatskanzlei Saarland, [CC BY NC DN 2.0](#)

That the topic sparked great interest, was also reflected in the number of participants: 651 students, many in groups, submitted their research. In the end, eight works received a prize in four different categories. The Tandem Prize was awarded to research teams from France and Germany who worked together on a topic. First place went to students from Sceaux and Dresden, who created a Genially Page on baroque dancing in 17th and 18th centuries as mean of cultural diplomacy between France and Saxony.

The second place of the High School Prize was awarded to a student from Münster. He investigated the unlikely Franco-German friendship between Jacques Anquetil and Rudi Altig, that started with them being opponents in street bike racing and ended in a deep friendship. The young historian decided to present his findings in a Graphic Novel which he drew himself.

Other awarded works dealt with women's soccer, Olympic games and bicycles in German-French relations. Some awarded students even used the occasion for holding short speeches, in which they not only thanked the organisers and their tutors, but also explained how the competition has led to new friendships and a better understanding of shared history.



Anke Rehlinger congratulated all winners

Photo: Staatskanzlei Saarland, [CC BY NC DN 2.0](#)

This is also what Tobias Bütow, German Secretary General of the Franco-German Youth Office, hoped to achieve with the competition: "The FGYO is convinced that an understanding of one's own and shared history can strengthen democracy and democratic processes in the long term and help to secure peace. The Franco-German History Competition motivates young people to engage with history, because with each new generation, perspectives on past times and events change."