

Call for Applications 17th German-Japanese Young Leaders Forum 2026

“(In)Security” How Can Young Leaders Contribute to Stability in Uncertain Times?

September 11 (Fri) – September 20 (Sun), 2026

1. Objectives

Since 2006, the German-Japanese Young Leaders Forum has inspired the next generation of leaders to contribute to international relations. Young professionals from various fields are invited by the JDZB to participate in a ten-day program to address politically and socially relevant issues, deepen mutual understanding through collaboration, and build lasting relationships among participants and beyond.

The program aims to establish sustainable networks that further strengthen cooperation between Germany and Japan, thereby contributing to the international community.

2. Applicant Eligibility

Each year, numerous private corporations and public institutions are invited to recommend promising young professionals for the program. Applicants should be between 25 and 35 years of age and must be fluent in English.

From among the recommended candidates, 16 outstanding young professionals—eight from Germany and eight from Japan—are carefully selected, ensuring a high level of professional diversity within the group.

3. Time and Place

The ten-day program will be held from September 11 (Fri) to September 20 (Sun), 2026, in Berlin. It consists of two parts, namely a summer school and an alumni conference.

4. Topic and Program

The German-Japanese Young Leaders Forum 2026 will address the theme of “(In)Security.” The international order is facing increasing strain, with security challenges arising across multiple dimensions. In response to shared geopolitical pressures, Germany and Japan are strengthening their security and defence cooperation to uphold a rules-based international order. At the same time, cyberattacks pose serious threats, supply chains are becoming more fragile, and climate change is intensifying risks ranging from resource scarcity to extreme weather events. As ageing societies, both countries are also facing growing pressures on their social security systems.

This forum invites participants to explore security from a broad, multidimensional perspective. The ability of societies to cope with uncertainty and maintain confidence in the future depends on a wide range of factors beyond traditional notions of security, including energy and supply security, domestic stability, social welfare systems, and the psychological impact of living in uncertain times.

Against this backdrop, the forum will examine how young leaders can contribute to addressing security challenges across these diverse areas. Distinguished experts from diverse fields will be invited to share their perspectives and engage in discussions with participants. Developments in Germany, Europe, and Japan will be examined within a global context, and innovative approaches to problem-solving will be explored, particularly through discussions in mixed working groups. The program also includes visits to selected institutions in Berlin. During an alumni conference at the end of the program, current participants will have the opportunity to connect with former participants from previous years.

5. Funding and Expenditure

The German-Japanese Young Leaders Forum is planned and implemented by the Japanese-German Center Berlin (JDZB). It is funded by Daido Life Insurance Company and Mori Manufacturing Research and Technology Foundation.

While the program covers essential expenses such as travel, accommodation, and meals, additional financial support from applicants' affiliated organizations is greatly appreciated.

Application

Deadline: May 15, 2026

Documents required:

- Application Form
- Curriculum Vitae
- Letter of Recommendation from their current employer

All documents must be written in English.

Please send your complete application by email to:

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Project Officer

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