

## **No more age silos, but dialogue with and between all generations – this is one of the ways to counter political disillusionment**

Across a wide range of issues, including employment, pension systems, climate change, health and care services, and political participation, both younger and older generations feel inadequately represented in the current policy responses. This is contributing to growing political disillusionment and jeopardising the cohesion of European societies.

At a conference on [Promoting intergenerational solidarity in the EU](#), hosted by the Civil Society Organisations' Group of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), representatives from across civil society put forward proposals to counter these developments. They jointly called on the new European Commission – and in particular the Commissioner-designate for Intergenerational Fairness, Glenn Micallef – and on the new European Parliament to break down silos and take into account the interests, needs and rights of all generations equally. People in all age groups, and whether from rural or urban areas, must be equally valued, listened to and connected with, which should be ensured through genuine civil dialogue. Developing long-term strategies, which address the challenges linked to longevity, changing societal models and multiple crises, and which continue way beyond one term of office, is fundamental here.

**Séamus Boland**, President of the Civil Society Organisations' Group, welcomed the intention of European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen to raise the profile of intergenerational fairness in policy-making through a dedicated portfolio. The European Commission urgently needed to publish a Green Paper on Intergenerational Solidarity, as the EESC recommends in an [opinion](#) that was adopted in September 2024.

‘Intergenerational solidarity is central to the health of our democracies and a sustainable future for all,’ said Mr Boland. ‘Civil society should represent all generations in decision-making. An open, transparent and regular dialogue with civil society organisations in all policy areas, as our Group also called for in an [open letter](#) to the EU institutions, is key to effective policies and cohesive and resilient communities’.

The conference provided an opportunity not only to discuss the challenges, opportunities and best practices in intergenerational solidarity, but also for an exchange between institutional and civil society actors.

**Marzena Okła-Drewnowicz**, Poland’s Minister for Senior Policy and representative of the upcoming Polish Presidency of the Council of the EU, said in a video message that ‘intergenerational solidarity is not just an answer to the aging society challenge – it is a great opportunity to build a Europe where everyone, regardless of age, has a place’.

**Krzysztof Balon**, Vice-President of the Civil Society Organisations' Group and EESC rapporteur, presented the main recommendations of the EESC opinion on the subject. He explained that the EESC is calling on the European Commission to adopt a coordinated, cross-cutting EU approach to intergenerational solidarity that ensures the rights of both younger and older people, and to adopt a

recommendation calling on the Member States to take into account the intergenerational aspects in the labour market. The opinion also advocates that intergenerational solidarity be established as one of the objectives of the European Social Fund in the 2027-2034 Multiannual Financial Framework and its implementing regulations. The EESC itself would consider hosting an Intergenerational Solidarity Forum.

Such a forum could enable an exchange of information and experience in the field at European level, which was welcomed by the participants of the conference. From care farms to support for young caregivers, co-housing and intergenerational events, there are many positive examples of intergenerational solidarity that could inspire EU policy-making.

EU policy in this area must be driven forward by civil society stakeholders, according to **Katarina Ivanković Knežević**, Director for Social Rights and Inclusion at the European Commission. The adequacy of welfare systems, a subject linked to intergenerational solidarity, was crucial for the competitiveness of the EU's economies. The formal care sector and pension literacy needed to be promoted.

However, guest speakers and participants also highlighted the challenges faced by informal caregivers and people in rural areas, especially young farmers. They called for informal care to be recognised and supported. Young people must be given incentives to move to or return to rural areas and to start their own businesses. Access to finance and land were crucial here. The point was also made that volunteers should be given the necessary tools to play their role in the promotion of intergenerational solidarity. A [European Strategy for Older People](#), as proposed by the EESC, should be adopted. The youth dimension in national policies should be monitored in the European Semester process.

### **Background:**

This conference and the EESC opinion on [Promoting European intergenerational solidarity – towards an EU horizontal approach](#) are the culmination of tireless work on this issue by the EESC's Civil Society Organisations' Group. Over the last few years, the Group has called for a European Strategy for older persons, championed the rights of young people and care workers, and focused attention on the need for sustainable long-term care services and health systems. Affordable and sustainable housing has also been the focus of a recent study commissioned by the Group. The study will be presented at the Group's next conference on *Protecting Europe's most vulnerable through sustainable and affordable housing*, taking place on 21 November at the EESC in Brussels.

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