



#EUSKADIGLOBALA



Conference Delivering intergenerational solidarity – the role of services of general interest

11 June 2026 | 9:30 - 13:00 | EESC VMA 22

Conference co-organised by the European Economic and Social Committee and the Basque Government

Objective: to highlight the political and social relevance of services of general interest and public services in implementing the European intergenerational solidarity approach.

Concept note

Services of General Interest (SGIs) are a crucial component of European economic, social and legal systems. They include areas such as housing, water and energy supply, waste and sewage disposal, public transport, health, social services, youth and family, and culture and communication services.

Being fundamental to the well-being of society, they are a key pillar of the European social model. Through their redistribution, preventive and enabling functions, SGIs and public services foster social cohesion and increase trust in public institutions, in line with the objectives of the Treaties of the EU and the European Pillar of Social Rights.

SGIs, including public services, are uniquely positioned to put the principle of intergenerational solidarity into practice, as they directly influence access to resources, opportunities and social participation for people of all ages. They can play a central role in promoting fairness between generations, reinforcing social progress and fostering community cohesion.

In contemporary societies, demographic shifts such as aging populations, declining birth rates, evolving labour markets and long-term fiscal sustainability present significant challenges for maintaining intergenerational balance and mutual support. These trends, combined with multiple crises, can have political consequences and may divide European societies and create barriers to the real inclusion of views of different generations and their participation.

Highlighting the political and social relevance of SGIs and public services is essential to ensure that policymakers recognise their potential not only as mechanisms for service delivery but also as instruments for promoting intergenerational fairness.

In accordance with Article 3(3) of the Treaty on European Union, the Union has a legal obligation to promote 'solidarity between generations'. The preamble to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU states that it has a forward-looking dimension, as the enjoyment of the rights it confers 'entails responsibilities and duties' for 'future generations'.

The principle of intergenerational solidarity has multiple dimensions and emphasises the reciprocal responsibilities of younger and older generations, fostering understanding, respect and shared benefits across age groups. It also involves people of different ages co-creating projects to respond to diverse needs (housing, employment, loneliness, connectivity, mobility, etc.).

In recent years, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and its Permanent Group on Services of General Interest have worked intensively to ensure the appropriate provision of SGIs, in particular in response to the growing concerns of many European citizens about the availability, affordability and sustainability of decent housing.

With the Own-initiative opinion on *The role of services of general interest (SGI) for competitiveness, social cohesion and democracy in the European Union* ([TEN/851](#), adopted in July 2025) the EESC called for a holistic approach to services of general interest policies (SGIs), as opposed to the current sectoral approach of EU policies, recognising the central role of modern SGIs in promoting sustainable prosperity and competitiveness.

In September 2024 the EESC adopted an own-initiative opinion entitled [Promoting European intergenerational solidarity – towards an EU horizontal approach](#). The EESC called on the European Commission to publish a Green Paper on intergenerational solidarity to include proposals related to the world of work, the silver economy, pension systems, health and care services, local development, housing, mobility, climate policy, lifelong learning and volunteering.

In the Political Guidelines for the next European Commission term (2024-2029), President Ursula von der Leyen recognised that it is imperative to ensure that decisions taken today do not harm future generations and that there is greater engagement and solidarity between people of different ages. Following this, a Commissioner responsible for intergenerational fairness was appointed to ensure a coordinated, cross-cutting EU approach to this issue.

The EESC considers that intergenerational solidarity should be one of the criteria for assessing whether legislation and other EU instruments contribute to the aims set out in Article 3(3) of the Treaty on European Union.

As of 2023, the EESC implements a Youth Test on work that has significant relevance for young people. The Youth Test helps promote intergenerational fairness across EU policies, as young people's perspectives make it possible to consider future challenges and opportunities.

The EU economy can only thrive if all population groups, regardless of their age, participate in the EU's labour market and society, in line with the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

This conference will serve as a platform to showcase the societal and political importance of public services in promoting intergenerational solidarity, providing concrete recommendations for policymakers and stakeholders.

In doing so, it seeks to contribute meaningfully to the European Commission's forthcoming Intergenerational Fairness Strategy.

As follow up to this event, an International Conference will be held in 2027 in the Basque Country, within the framework of the Zubiak Basque Strategy for the Intergenerational Pact, which reflects the region's commitment to intergenerational solidarity.