



REPORT

Held during Civil Society Week 2026, the workshop entitled “**Whose resilience? Intergenerational fairness, gender and minoritised language communities**” asked whose resilience is Europe relying on, for whom are we building resilience, and at what cost? The session was rooted in the EU’s foundational values under Article 2 TEU and brought together **Volonteuropa**, **Generation Climate Europe (GCE)** and the **European Language Equality Network (ELEN)**. This workshop characterised resilience as a democratic issue that spans generations, gender and languages, and as a form of continuity: of rights, relationships, languages, belonging and the ability to live, organise and pass on culture and knowledge across generations. The session brought grassroots perspectives to the fore and also called on institutions to protect current and future generations and to safeguard Europe’s minoritised and endangered languages.

The session was facilitated by **Furkan Sorkuncuk** of Volonteuropa and opened with a short introduction. Envelopes were then distributed to participants. Each envelope contained a letter written in the past as part of the 4Voices project, together with instructions to write a letter to someone who will attend Civil Society Week in 2027. Participants expressed emotions, hopes and concerns about the future and connected these reflections to questions of resilience, memory, gender, language and intergenerational fairness. The panel discussion consisted of six distinguished speakers, who shared the following key messages:

Nicoletta Merlo (President of EESC Youth Group (Gr.II)), emphasised that resilience should be understood as the power to change systems. She highlighted the courage and resilience shown by young people across different parts of the world and stressed that their voices must be included in EU institutions and decision-making processes from the outset. She referred to several initiatives within the EESC, including the establishment of the Youth Group, the adoption of the Youth Test, climate and sustainability roundtables bringing together youth organisations and European Commissioners, and the appointment of a youth delegate to the COP. She underlined that meaningful participation requires future-proofing policies through intergenerational impact considerations, including tools such as intergenerational budgeting.

Davyth Hicks (Secretary-General of the European Language Equality Network) addressed the situation of minoritised languages in Europe. He stressed that languages do not gradually disappear on their own, but decline as a result of deliberate political, social and economic pressures, which undermine the resilience of language communities. He called on the EU to establish, in partnership with ELEN, a Strategic Framework for the protection and development of Europe’s minoritised and endangered languages. This should include binding measures, a dedicated budget line and an Emergency Committee empowered to support vital language projects and intervene where languages are at risk.

Michaela Karamperi (Co-President of Generation Climate Europe) highlighted how current economic and political systems place the burden of resilience on those least responsible for crises, while those who benefit most, including large corporations, are not those expected to be resilient. She stressed that resilience should not be understood as risk reduction alone, but requires a transformative approach that addresses the structural causes of vulnerability. She emphasised the need to create political space for marginalised groups and to recognise intergenerational justice as a guiding principle, with young people, future generations and affected communities treated as key stakeholders in shaping policies. She also called for greater attention to foresight and long-term thinking, as well as stronger environmental protection, rather than the weakening of existing safeguards.

Béla Kuslits (Coordinator of the Future Generations Initiative) presented the development of the Intergenerational Fairness Strategy, outlining its consultation process and the integration of future generations' perspectives. He highlighted the obligation to consider the rights and interests of future generations, including in areas such as climate governance and litigation. He emphasised the need to approach policymaking with a long-term perspective and to think in terms of multiple possible futures. This requires considering different pathways and developing realistic scenarios based on credible data and trends. He stressed that these scenarios must include marginalised communities and reflect social and environmental realities. He concluded by underlining the importance of protecting environmental resources and the need to build resilience for the environment itself.

Nicolas Levrat (UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues) highlighted the role of diversity as a key component of societal resilience. He emphasised that minority communities, particularly those of minoritised and endangered languages, demonstrate resilience out of necessity. Persons belonging to minorities are not only resilient for themselves, but also contribute to society by sustaining diversity, which in turn strengthens collective resilience. He stressed that stronger protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities is needed. In this context, he underlined that the EU must recognise the protection of language minorities and linguistic diversity as foundational to the Union. In line with Article 2 of the TEU it must take measures to safeguard these languages and has the competence to intervene under Article 167 (TEU), which enables the EU to protect Europe's cultural and linguistic heritage. He also supported ELEN's proposal for a new EU Strategic Framework for endangered languages.

Anita Zorzi (4Voices Youth Ambassador) critically reflected on the concept of resilience itself. She questioned the idea of resilience as the ability to "bounce back" to previous conditions, asking whether returning to the status quo is desirable, particularly when it has not been a safe or inclusive space for all. She also highlighted growing feelings of uncertainty and declining hope among young people. In this context, she argued that resilience should not be understood as adaptation to existing systems, but as a transformative approach that challenges the structures which force individuals and communities to be resilient.

The session concluded with a moment of silence. Participants completed their letters, which were then released into the air and collected at the end of the session.

