

PRES.2026.01.02

European Seniors' Union — Year Plan 2026

“Strengthening Europe Through Intergenerational Solidarity”

Draft for Presidency Meeting – January 2026

1. Introduction: 2026 as the Year of Intergenerational Dialogue and Solidarity

The European Union for Seniors (ESU) enters 2026 with a renewed determination to put international solidarity high on the European political agenda, and thus aims to contribute to strengthening Europe by deepening intergenerational solidarity – the cornerstone of the ESU’s mission and the guiding theme of the 2030 Strategic Action Plan.

Across Europe, demographic shifts, rapid digital transformation, migration, loneliness, and declining civic trust challenge the bonds between generations. These challenges also create opportunities: seniors’ potential as mentors, volunteers, community-builders, and democratic actors has never been more essential.

In 2026, the ESU will use all its activities—meetings, conferences, trainings, advocacy—to reinforce our central message:

Europe thrives when generations work together.

This Year Plan translates that conviction into concrete actions that develop shared responsibility, mutual respect, and a common future for Europeans of all ages.

2. Strategic Objectives for 2026: All Framed Through Intergenerational Solidarity

2.1 Reinforce Visibility of Intergenerational Dialogue

Position ESU as a key actor promoting cooperation among generations in the political, social economic and cultural spheres.

This includes proactive presence in European debates and dissemination of *The publication of this document received financial support from the European Parliament. Sole liability rests with the author. The European Parliament is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.*

positive narratives around ageing, mentoring, care, digital inclusion, and active citizenship.

2.2 Strengthen Policy Influence on Demographic and Social Cohesion Issues

Ensure seniors' perspectives inform EU policy debates on demographic change, the care strategy, digital transition, housing, and civic participation—always highlighting intergenerational implications and solutions.

2.3 Deepen Cross-Generational Cooperation Within the EPP Family

Expand structured collaboration with YEPP, EPP Women, and other associations within the EPP Group, Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies, Robert Schuman Institute and Konrad Adenauer Foundation, and national partners to develop shared initiatives addressing Europe's major societal transitions.

2.4 Empower Member Organisations as Local Intergenerational Actors

Provide knowledge enabling member associations to create themselves intergenerational projects at national and community levels.

3. Key Activities for 2026 Aligned With the Theme “Intergenerational Solidarity”

3.1 Presidency Meeting (Online)

23 January 2026, 09:00–10:00

Focus: Finances, Accounts 2025, Budget 2026

Intergenerational Contribution:

Good governance ensures long-term organisational stability—essential for sustaining intergenerational programmes, shared learning spaces, and community-level initiatives.

3.2 Executive Committee Meeting (Online)

26 March 2026, 10:00–11:00

Focus: Approval of Accounts 2025

Intergenerational Contribution:

Transparent and responsible management strengthens the ESU's capacity to advocate for intergenerational fairness and solidarity in public policy.

3.3 Presidency & Executive Committee Meeting + Intergenerational Conference

28–30 April 2026 – Budapest, Hungary

Organisers: ESU, YEPP, EPP Women, Robert Schuman Institute, WMCES

Theme: *Intergenerational Dialogue and Competitiveness*

Why It Matters:

This is the central flagship of the 2026 theme.

It builds bridges between younger and older generations to strengthen social cohesion, democratic trust, and economic competitiveness.

Expected Outcomes:

- Shared political message on intergenerational fairness within the EPP and with AGE Platform Europe.
- Practical exchanges on digital citizenship, civic participation, and demographic transition.
- Strengthened cooperation between ESU and youth partners, and work towards gender equality.

This conference embodies the Strategic Plan's commitment to **active senior citizenship, inclusive participation, and intergenerational cooperation/dialogue and solidarity**

3.4. ESU Summer Academy 2026 – Nicosia, Cyprus

4–5 June 2026

Theme: *Loneliness and Migration – Intergenerational Responses to Shared Challenges*

Intergenerational Relevance:

- Loneliness affects people of all ages; solutions are strongest when generations collaborate.
- Migration reshapes families and communities, requiring intergenerational empathy, shared responsibility, and inclusion and contributes to the economic development..
- Seniors can act as cultural mediators, volunteers, mentors, and community anchors.

Strategic Contribution:

This academy strengthens learning, research exchange, and community-building—key drivers of intergenerational resilience.

3.5 ESU Autumn Conference – Bergen, Norway

5–6 November 2026

Theme: *Housing and Security in an Intergenerational Europe*

Intergenerational Relevance:

- Age-friendly housing benefits families across generations.
- Security—social, digital, economic—must be built on cooperation between younger and older citizens.
- Community planning, urban development, and care strategies require a shared generational perspective.

This conference strengthens ESU's policy engagement on long-term care, ageing in place, and safe communities—key components of intergenerational well-being. Safety also has a broader component, which is safety within our European borders.

4. Cross-Cutting Intergenerational Actions Throughout 2026

4.1 Advocacy and Policy Work

ESU will focus advocacy on:

- Intergenerational fairness in public spending, pensions, and labour markets.
- Combatting ageism and generational stereotyping.
- Promoting demographic impact assessments in policy.
- Encouraging cross-generational volunteering and civic engagement.
- Supporting the development of the **European Pact on Intergenerational Solidarity**.

4.2 Communication and Positive Narratives

- Regular statements emphasising that *ageing is living* and that seniors are partners, not burdens

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- Visibility campaigns with YEPP and other partners on digital inclusion and democratic participation.
- Storytelling to highlight successful intergenerational projects across Europe.

4.3. Strengthening the Membership Network

- Encourage national sections to create or expand intergenerational programmes.
- Promote cross-border exchanges and community-level collaboration.
- Support Vice-Presidents in expanding ESU's footprint in their regions.

4.4. Partnerships for Intergenerational Impact

- Joint initiatives with Martens Centre (policy research), Robert Schuman Institute (training), Konrad Adenauer Foundation (education), and academic experts.
- Collaboration with the Council of Europe on the themes of democracy and generational trust.
- Engagement with AGE Platform Europe to ensure unified advocacy on age equality.

5. Expected Results by the End of 2026

By pursuing intergenerational solidarity as the guiding theme, ESU expects to achieve:

- **Stronger visibility** of ESU as Europe's principal voice for senior citizens in intergenerational dialogue.
- **Enhanced cooperation** with youth and women's organisations within the EPP.
- **Concrete policy influence** on demographic, digital, and care policies through an intergenerational lens.
- **Empowered national organisations** with new tools, networks, and ideas to advance intergenerational projects.
- **Greater cohesion within ESU**, with Vice-Presidents and members more active in cross-border initiatives.
- **A renewed narrative** that replaces generational conflict with generational cooperation.

6. Conclusion

2026 is proposed as a **year fully dedicated to Intergenerational Solidarity**, turning the ESU's values into visible action. Each meeting, conference, training session, and policy initiative contributes to strengthening bonds between generations and building a more cohesive, resilient, and democratic Europe.

Through shared knowledge, stronger cooperation, and a unified voice, the ESU will show that Europe's future is intergenerational—or not at all.

Brussels, January 10, 2026
Stefaan Vercamer, President
Patrick Penninckx, Secretary General



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