



Confederation
of European
Senior Expert
Services



25 YEARS

SENT 2025 WORK PROGRAMME



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

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INTRODUCTION

CESES, the Confederation of European Senior Expert Services, is a European network dedicated to promoting the value of senior expertise as a driver for social, educational, and economic progress. Bringing together 20 member organisations and a community of over 25,000 senior volunteers, CESES works to foster intergenerational cooperation, strengthen skills ecosystems, and create opportunities for knowledge transfer across Europe. Its mission is to support senior experts in sharing their professional experience for the benefit of society, while enabling organisations, institutions, and communities to access high-quality expertise in a sustainable and inclusive way.



Committed to the principles of free democracy and a fair economic order, we deliver concrete results, intergenerational solidarity, and responsible action in accordance with European and international standards. By closely cooperating among our members, we aim to enable self-sufficiency and contribute to a higher standard of living. In its daily work, CESES strengthens the educational and professional ecosystem in Europe, creating new opportunities for its member organisations and its network of senior volunteers. These experts generously share their knowledge and experience for the benefit of society, helping to build a more cohesive, competitive and inclusive Europe.

Throughout 2025, within the framework of its SENT (Senior Experts Nurturing Talent) operating grant, CESES has developed and participated in a wide range of activities and events aimed at

promoting the value and contribution of senior experts to society, which lies at the core of CESES' mission. Across all internal meetings, working groups, mentoring and training activities, capacity-building sessions, seminars, conferences, policy and advocacy actions, dissemination initiatives and events implemented during the year, a total of 4,761 participants were actively involved at local, national and European levels. Across these pages, readers will find an overview of the initiatives that have enhanced the capacities of CESES members and senior experts, while also benefitting young people, SMEs, policymakers, stakeholders and citizens who have had the opportunity to learn from, collaborate with, and recognise the vital value of senior expertise in Europe's educational, social and economic development.

1. CESES GOVERNANCE

The first set of activities carried out by CESES within the framework of SENT relates to governance. Throughout 2025, regular meetings have been organised to ensure smooth and direct communication between CESES management and its member organisations, enabling joint decision-making on the strategic direction of the network.

a. Board Meetings & General Assembly

In total, 4 board meetings were held, including 1 extraordinary session. These quarterly meetings, attended mainly by the 7 board members and the Executive Director of CESES, provided a forum to discuss key matters concerning the coordination and proper functioning of the organisation.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Bernard Boidin
President



Joachim Fronia
Secretary General



Doris Bandin
Vice President



Jacques Van Egten
Treasurer



Gianmaria Scapin
Board Member



Bernhard Tuchen
Board Member



Milena Van Not
Board Member

The first meeting, held in the month of February in a hybrid format, marked the start of the new year. The session provided an overview of the planned activities for 2025, the available budget, and the calendar of upcoming board and members' meetings.



The second meeting, also held in hybrid format in the month of June, served to assess the initial progress of the activities. It included updates on the change of presidency effective from July, new funding strategies, and proposals for cooperation among members and with external entities.

The third board meeting, held in October in person in Paris, home city of the new CESES President, offered an opportunity to review CESES' financial situation, discuss new projects and proposals for the start of the new working period in September, as well as share expectations and strategic objectives for the coming months.



Finally, the last meeting of the year, held in person in Brussels in December, officially closed the final year of the SENT operating grant. During this session, participants reviewed all activities and achievements, assessed the year's outcomes, and presented the budget and priorities for the following year.

An extraordinary meeting of the board was also held online in March, where various current issues relating to the good governance of CESES were discussed.

Regarding the General Assembly, an official meeting was held in April in a hybrid format, followed by an extraordinary online session in November. These annual gatherings allow CESES and its members to come together to review key organisational matters, approve strategic decisions, and share updates from the regular Board Meetings.

During both sessions, participants discussed and approved several important items, including the financial report of the previous year, the work plan for the upcoming period, and the proposed amendments to CESES' statutes. The Assembly was also informed of the change in CESES Presidency, which took place on 1 July, and formally approved the new membership applications presented.



The April session brought together 23 participants (14 attending in person and 9 online) while the November extraordinary meeting gathered 23 participants in a fully online format.

These meetings ensured transparency, democratic participation, and a shared strategic vision among CESES members, reinforcing the organisation's commitment to collaborative governance and continuous improvement.



b. Membership

At the beginning of 2025, CESES counted 19 member organisations from 12 different European countries. Unfortunately, during the year CESES bid farewell to one of its long-standing members, Italian Senior Expert Service (ISES). However, thanks to CESES' continued efforts and its strategic approach to expanding the European network of senior experts, 2 new organisations were successfully nominated and unanimously approved by the General Assembly:

Golden League – Kuldne Liiga (ESTONIA):

Founded in 2012, Golden League began as an organisation advocating for the rights of older people, particularly professionals facing age discrimination. Over time, its mission has expanded to encompass all issues related to older adults, with the aim of ensuring their full inclusion in society and the labour market. The organisation promotes intergenerational cooperation initiatives and encourages older people to share their expertise and experience for the benefit of younger generations and the wider community.

Exchange VZW (BELGIUM):

Based in Antwerp, Exchange VZW is a returning CESES member that operates through a network of volunteer consultants from a variety of professional sectors. Its mission is to foster sustainable and inclusive economic growth, contributing to greater prosperity and well-being. Since 2017, Exchange VZW has focused on long-term growth programmes supporting entrepreneurs through coaching and expert missions across eight African countries. The organisation supports around 40 entrepreneurs annually and maintains a pool of 150–200 expert volunteers. By acting as an intermediary, Exchange connects Belgian companies and consultants with entrepreneurs in partner countries, aiming to deliver more sustainable business solutions.

The 20 current members of CESES:

 <p>Agirabcd - Association Générale des Intervenants Retraitées pour des Actions Bénévoles de Coopération et de Développement abcd (FRANCE)</p>	 <p>OTECI - Organisation pour la Transmission des Expériences et des Compétences Intergénérationnelle (FRANCE)</p>
 <p>ASEP - Austrian Senior Experts Pool (AUSTRIA)</p>	 <p>PUM - PUM Netherlands Senior Experts (THE NETHERLANDS)</p>
 <p>AVe - Association Volontaires Experts (FRANCE)</p>	 <p>SECOT - Seniors Espanoles para la Cooperación Técnica (SPAIN)</p>
 <p>BSC - Belgian Senior Consultants (BELGIUM)</p>	 <p>SEC - Senior Expert Contact, Swiss Contact (SWITZERLAND)</p>
 <p>CTAO - Cyprus Third Age Observatory (CYPRUS)</p>	 <p>SENIOR EXPERTS AUSTRIA - Jugend Eine Welt, Senior Experts Austria (AUSTRIA)</p>
 <p>ECTI - Bénévolat Senior de Compétences (FRANCE)</p>	 <p>SENIORES - Seniores Italia Lazio Odv (ITALY)</p>
 <p>Exchange VZW (BELGIUM)</p>	 <p>SES - Senior Expert Service, Stiftung der Deutschen Wirtschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GERMANY)</p>
 <p>Golden League – Kuldne Liiga (ESTONIA)</p>	 <p>Vol.To - Volontariato Torino ETS (ITALY)</p>
 <p>LSC - Luxembourg Senior Consultants a.s.b.l. (LUXEMBOURG)</p>	 <p>VSP ODV - Volontari Senior Professionali Odv (ITALY)</p>
 <p>NESTOR - NESTOR Partners ry. (FINLAND)</p>	 <p>50Plus Hellas (GREECE)</p>

Thanks to these two new additions and its strong partnerships, by the end of 2025 CESES proudly counts 20 member organisations representing 13 European countries.

In addition to its own growing network, CESES continues to be an active member of the European network CEV, Centre for European Volunteering. This membership enables CESES to connect with other organisations that share common interests, exchange good practices, and promote volunteering and active citizenship at European level.

c. Internal Management, Coordination and Monitoring of Activities

As part of its internal management and the monitoring of administrative and financial matters, CESES established several working groups to ensure the efficient preparation and implementation of the SENT activities, namely:

- 1) **Executive meetings** between the President, Secretary General, and Executive Director were held whenever necessary, but generally on a monthly basis.
- 2) **Weekly team meetings** to review ongoing tasks, share updates, and ensure smooth communication and coordination within the **CESES Secretariat**, which by the end of the year consisted of:

- Executive Director
- Project Officer
- Communications & Policy Officer
- Project & Fundraising Assistant
- Admin & Finance Assistant - Eurodissey trainee

Prior to the current Admin & Finance Assistant, CESES also welcomed an Erasmus+ Intern for the role from March to June 2025 (see below).

SECRETARIAT



Ismael Paez Civico
Executive Director



Ines Sevilla
Project Officer



Anthony Banfield
Comms & Policy
Officer



Anastasiia Semida
Project &
Fundraising
Assistant



Angela Abellan Muñoz
Admin & Finance
Assistant
(Eurodissey trainee)



Jonathan Lopez
Admin & Finance
Assistant
(March - June 2025)

- 3) **Monthly meetings** with the **Senior Advisors** to identify main cooperation areas and define where their expertise could best support CESES' ongoing activities. By the end of 2025, the team of Senior Advisors included Andrew Jacobs, Gisela Lange, and Hélène Chraye.

SENIOR ADVISORS



Andrew Jacobs



Gisela Lange



Hélène Chraye

4) **Financial meetings**, regularly held between the Executive Director and the Treasurer, as well as several joint Senior Advisor-Executive Committee Meetings, so as to strengthen communication and cooperation across governance levels.

All these working groups and periodic meetings ensured the smooth achievement of SENT 2025 objectives, a balanced distribution of tasks and responsibilities among team members, and the establishment of efficient communication channels that maximised CESES' performance and impact.

2. NETWORK & MENTORING ACTIVITIES

Capacity building has been a core component of CESES' work under the SENT programme in 2025, aiming to strengthen the skills, knowledge and organisational capacities of senior expert volunteers and member organisations. Through a combination of structured learning opportunities, peer exchange and practice-oriented activities, CESES supported continuous professional development and knowledge transfer across its network.

Key capacity building actions included the CESES Academy, Monthly Members Meetings (MoMs), a seminar on Circular Economy, as well as capacity building activities and events implemented by and for senior volunteers.

In total, the CESES capacity building programme has been implemented in Belgium, Italy, Germany and online, training a total of 504 citizens, mainly senior volunteers.

a. Capacity Building Activities: Internal Activities with Members and Senior Volunteers

i. CESES Academy

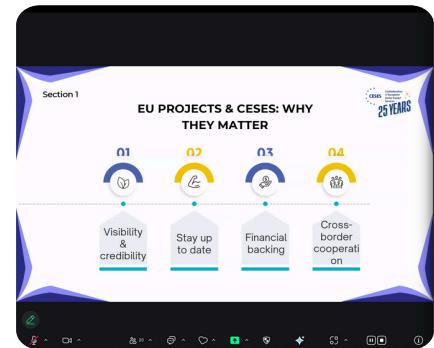
As in previous years of the SENT project (2023 and 2024), CESES launched the third edition of the CESES Academy in 2025. Held online on 8, 9 and 10 September, the Academy invited CESES members and senior expert volunteers to take part in a series of workshops aimed at enhancing their capacities across different sectors, while offering an excellent opportunity to exchange good practices, projects and initiatives within the CESES network.

The CESES Academy 2025 consisted of five sessions over three days, bringing together a total of 117 participants, mainly senior expert volunteers from CESES member organisations.

The opening session was introduced by the President and the Executive Director of CESES, who welcomed participants to this third edition of the Academy, held in the special context of CESES's 25th Anniversary, and presented the overall programme.

The following sessions featured three capacity-building workshops, delivered by the CESES team and by SECOT, a CESES member organisation:

- **Workshop on EU Projects** focused on understanding the EU funding framework, developing successful project proposals and building solid partnerships. The session included an interactive segment where participants worked in small groups to outline three potential ideas for future collaborative projects.



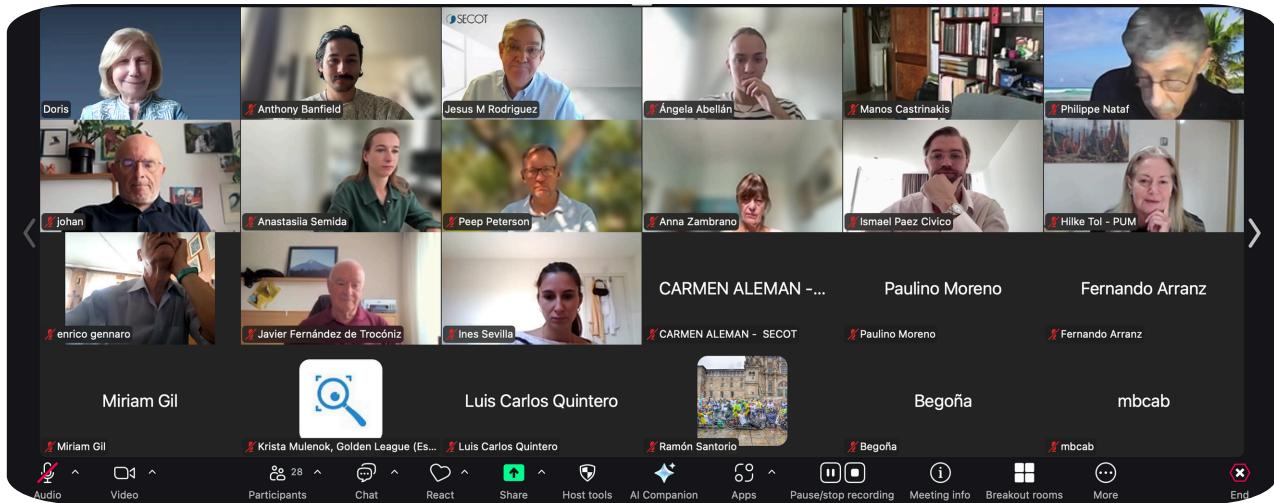
- **Workshop on Advocacy and Policy Engagement** explored the basics of advocacy in the EU context, providing practical guidance on how to promote CESES's mission and values, tailor communication to different stakeholders, and share strategies and experiences from across the network.



- **Workshop on Retiring with Purpose** promoted senior volunteering as a meaningful transition into retirement, highlighting its social benefits and the importance of raising awareness about volunteering as an opportunity to remain active and contribute to society.



The Academy concluded with a closing session led by the CESES President, who summarised the key lessons and achievements of the event, expressed appreciation for the cooperation of all participants, and reaffirmed CESES's commitment to developing new initiatives to further strengthen the capacities of its member organisations and senior experts.



ii. Monthly Members Meetings (MoM)

In addition to the CESES Academy, and as part of CESES's ongoing commitment to strengthening the capacities of its member organisations and their senior expert volunteers, Monthly Members Meetings (MoM) were organised throughout 2025.

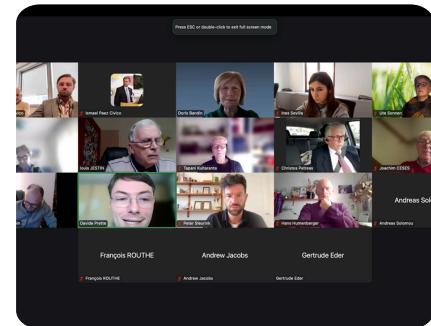
These sessions provided a dedicated monthly space for members of the CESES network to discuss current challenges, share experiences, and exchange good practices, thereby fostering stronger collaboration and peer learning within the network.

The meetings were generally held on the first Monday of each month, with a summer break during July and August. Each session focused on a specific topic relevant to the network's activities and to the professional development of senior expert volunteers.

There were a total of seven Monthly Members Meetings held throughout 2025, each designed to address a range of topics relevant to the interests and needs of the membership, including the following:

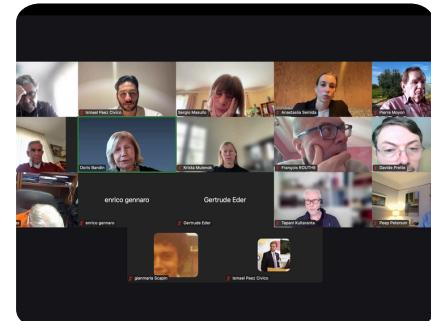
3 February 2025 – Financing of Organisations: Public or Private

Members exchanged their experiences and approaches to organisational funding, discussing best practices, common challenges, and opportunities for cooperation and diversification of resources.



3 March 2025 – Project Proposal Preparation (PPP)

This session guided participants through the key steps of developing a successful project proposal, while offering space to share expectations, clarify doubts, and strengthen members' capacity to participate in EU-funded projects.



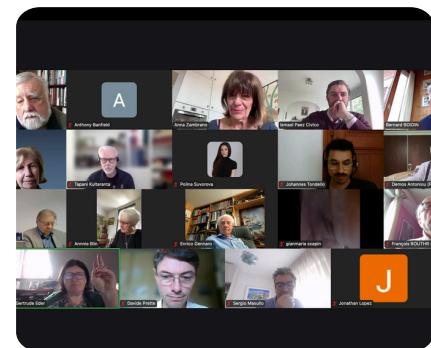
7 April 2025 – AI: Challenges and Opportunities for Senior Expert Volunteers

This meeting introduced the basic concepts of Artificial Intelligence and demonstrated intuitive tools that can help improve daily productivity. Participants also discussed potential risks associated with AI and shared the main challenges their senior experts face when engaging with new technologies.



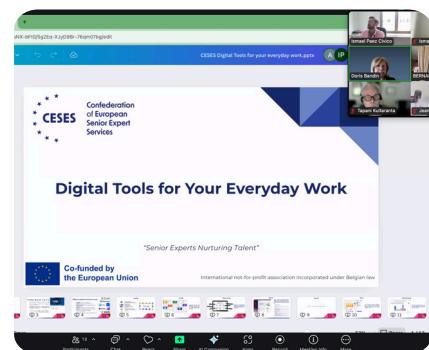
5 May 2025 – Communication and Social Media

CESES presented its communication and social media strategy, encouraging members to engage more actively with CESES' main online platforms. Members also shared their own communication practices, offering ideas and advice on addressing common outreach challenges.



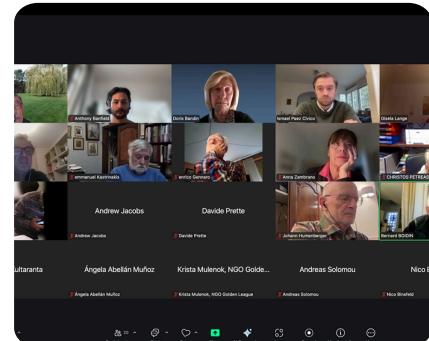
2 June 2025 – Digital Tools for Everyday Life

This session provided an overview of the most useful and user-friendly digital tools that can support daily work. CESES shared the key tools it uses internally and encouraged members to familiarise themselves with them, highlighting their collaborative potential and accessibility for senior volunteers.



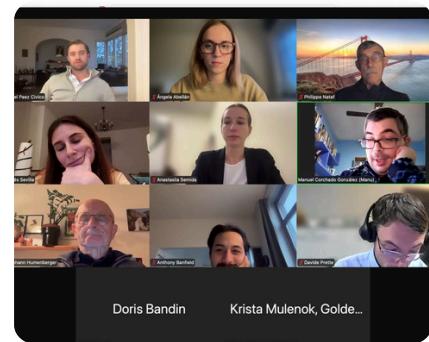
3 November 2025 – CESES Members' Engagement

This session focused on evaluating members' engagement and satisfaction with CESES's activities. Participants discussed strategies to enhance communication and collaboration between members and the CESES headquarters, aiming to further strengthen the sense of community within the network.



1 December 2025 – The Value of Senior Volunteer Experts in the Inclusion of Migrants in the Labour Market

This final session focused on presenting the Research & Policy Report on how to better include migrants and young people in the EU labour market by harnessing the potential and capacities of senior expert volunteers, and opening up space for members to discuss how to improve the potential of senior experts for a minority group such as migrants, with their specific needs and context.



Through these regular meetings, CESES continued to build a stronger framework for senior expert volunteering, encourage active dialogue and cooperation among its member organisations, and enhance the individual and collective capacities of all participants.

In total, the 2025 MoM series brought together 120 participants, whose acquired knowledge and skills were successfully transferred to their organisations and daily professional activities.

iii. Circular Economy Workshop

On 11 March 2025, CESES, in collaboration with its member organisation SECOT, organised an online workshop on the Circular Economy. The session provided participants with an opportunity to explore the principles of circular economy, understand its relevance for sustainable development, and discuss innovative approaches to resource management.

The workshop featured senior volunteer expert speakers from SECOT organisation, who shared their experiences and practical insights from the SECOT Circular Economy Observatory, highlighting ways to integrate circular economy practices into different industries and organisational activities.

A total of 28 participants, mainly senior volunteers from CESES member organisations, attended the session, gaining valuable knowledge and practical guidance to promote sustainable practices within their organisations and professional networks.

iv. Other Capacity Building Activities

In addition to the online capacity building sessions previously described, primarily aimed at CESES member organisations and their senior expert volunteers, CESES has also implemented training sessions, workshops, and seminars across various European countries. Delivered in participants' native languages, these

activities aim to extend the impact of capacity building beyond the Headquarters in Brussels, reaching a broader network and further enhancing the skills and expertise of senior volunteers throughout Europe.

Italy

In Rome, Italy, a series of seven workshops and training sessions were conducted, with a total of 150 senior volunteers from Seniores, CESES member organisation, participating. These sessions focused on a variety of topics designed to strengthen the knowledge and practical skills of senior experts in order to increase their impact in the mentoring programme with young mentees, including:

- Financial literacy (3 sessions)
- Artificial Intelligence (2 sessions)
- Informatics – hands-on training
- Internal exchange of competences to support youth education in navigating the world of work

These activities provided participants with practical tools and knowledge, fostering their ability to mentor and guide young people, and contributing to the overall mission of transferring expertise across generations.

Germany

As part of CESES's wider capacity building efforts across Europe, two key activities were implemented in Germany in 2025 in collaboration with SES, Senior Expert Service, CESES member organisation: an Annual Capacity Building Meeting in Bonn and a Regional Meeting in Regensburg.

The Annual Meeting (29–30 October) gathered 47 participants and offered two days of peer learning, workshops and thematic exchanges on cooperation with stakeholders, communication practices and volunteer engagement. The programme also included a contribution from a CESES Senior Advisor, linking national practice with European-level developments under the

SENT programme.

The Regional Meeting (16 October) brought together 26 participants and focused on strengthening regional cooperation, sharing insights from international assignments and presenting initiatives such as the VerAplus mentoring programme and the cooperation with the German-African Youth Office. The meeting also provided updates on CESES activities and the SENT programme.

Both events contributed to enhancing skills, promoting knowledge exchange and reinforcing collaboration within the wider CESES network.

Austria

Lastly, CESES implemented additionally two preparation seminars in collaboration with SEA (Senior Experts in Austria), CESES member organisation. They were held in May and December in Vienna, with a total of 16 senior volunteers involved across both sessions.



The seminars provided a structured introduction to international volunteering, offering essential information on potential assignments and the operational framework of senior expert engagement. Participants were introduced to relevant programmes, engaged in direct exchanges with project partners and benefitted from first-hand insights shared by experienced senior experts who reflected on their own international assignments.

b. Mentoring Activities

Mentoring represents a core activity within CESES, allowing senior expert volunteers to transfer their experience and knowledge to the next generation, support professional development, and foster stronger intergenerational collaboration. Throughout 2025, CESES and its members implemented a range of mentoring initiatives

targeting young people, entrepreneurs, and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), providing guidance, expertise, and personalised support, as well as cross-border mentoring facilitated through the MAB platform, providing guidance, expertise, and personalised support across Europe.

In total, the CESES mentoring programme has been implemented in Italy, Spain and Austria, supporting a total of 2858 beneficiaries (2289 young people, 208 SMEs and 361 entrepreneurs in their professional and personal careers) and involving 386 senior experts.

i. Mentoring for Young People

CESES places particular emphasis on mentoring activities for young people, helping them develop the skills, knowledge, and confidence required to navigate the transition from education to the labour market. These programmes aim to strengthen soft skills, career orientation, and effective communication, preparing participants for future professional challenges.

Italy

In 2025, the mentoring programme in Rome in collaboration with Seniores Italia Lazio, CESES Member organisation, engaged 281 high school students in nine schools in Rome, primarily in their 4th and 5th (final) year of studies. 67 senior volunteers contributed providing guidance and support across two main activities:

- **Young & Enterprise** – Focused on developing soft skills, understanding the job market, and improving written and oral communication.
- **Communication and Information** – Explored the world of information and disinformation, while strengthening interpersonal skills and effective communication.

Moreover, In Turin, in collaboration with mentoring and youth-support activities implemented in collaboration with VSP, CESES

member organisation, reached 1,288 young people, supported by 54 senior mentors engaged across a series of targeted training sessions and awareness-raising events. The mentoring offer included three core activities:

- **“EU for You” – Guidance on EU opportunities for young people:** Introductory sessions presenting EU programmes, mobility schemes and funding opportunities available to young people entering the labour market, helping participants navigate existing pathways for learning, volunteering and employment.
- **Digital Skills Workshops (Competenze digitali):** Practical training aimed at strengthening essential digital competences, from basic ICT use to more advanced tools relevant for study, job search and professional development.
- **“Orientarsi al lavoro e competenze trasversali”:** A series of workshops focused on labour-market orientation and transversal skills, including communication, teamwork, problem-solving and self-management — key competences for a successful transition from education to employment.

These activities enabled senior volunteers to share their experience and expertise directly with students, enhancing their skills, broadening their perspectives, and supporting their preparation for higher education and the professional world.

Spain

In 2025, the mentoring programme in Spain, in collaboration with SECOT, CESES member organisation, engaged 720 vocational education students across Spain. 31 Senior volunteers delivered training sessions of personalised support, focused on strengthening students' employability and professional competencies.

Activities included practical workshops on curriculum vitae and cover letter, job interview simulations through role-playing and

sessions on digital identity and personal branding:

- **CV and Cover Letter Workshop** – Students learn how to structure and write an effective curriculum vitae and cover letter, focusing on clarity, strengths and alignment with job requirements. Seniors guide them in identifying their skills and presenting them professionally.
- **Job Interview & Role-Playing Workshop** – Through simulated interviews and role-playing exercises, students practise how to respond to questions, communicate confidently and demonstrate their competencies. Seniors provide real-time feedback to improve verbal and non-verbal communication.
- **Digital Identity and Personal Branding Workshop** – This session helps students to understand the online presence impact and teaches them how to build a positive and coherent digital identity. Seniors explain how to use social networks responsibly and how to craft an authentic personal brand.

Through these actions, SECOT's senior volunteers transferred their experience and knowledge directly to young learners, helping them build confidence, broaden their perspectives, and better prepare for future employment pathways.

ii. Mentoring for SMEs/Start-ups

As part of its mentoring activities for SMEs and early-stage entrepreneurs, CESES supported a structured programme in Austria aimed at guiding start-ups, particularly those created by long-term unemployed individuals, through the critical early phases of business development. A total of 416 participants were involved in this activity, including 208 SMEs and start-up founders and 208 senior expert volunteers providing tailored guidance.

Within this framework, senior experts contributed at two key stages. First, they participated in joint hearings with financial

institutions to assess the viability of business plans and the applicants' readiness to access microcredit funding. These hearings served as an essential preliminary step for entrepreneurs applying for soft loans of up to €15,000 through local savings banks.

Following a successful hearing and the creation of the new business, senior experts provided ongoing one-to-one mentoring over a period of up to three years. This support ranged from short consultations to multi-day advisory engagements, addressing challenges such as financial planning, marketing strategies, compliance requirements and business development. This personalised mentoring played a crucial role in strengthening the survival and growth prospects of the supported enterprises.

The programme also recorded a balanced participation of male and female microcredit clients (54% and 46% respectively), and reflected the diversity of start-up sectors involved, from craft production and food services to renewable energy and creative industries. Overall, this activity significantly contributed to enhancing entrepreneurial resilience and supporting inclusive economic participation through the expertise of senior volunteers.

iii. Mentoring for Entrepreneurs

CESES also implemented targeted mentoring activities aimed at entrepreneurship and start-up development, supporting 361 participants aspiring entrepreneurs in acquiring the skills and mindset required to develop business ideas and entrepreneurial initiatives. These activities focused on fostering entrepreneurial thinking, basic business knowledge, initiative, creativity and project development, guided by a total of 26 senior expert volunteers.

Italy

In 2025, CESES implemented entrepreneurship-oriented mentoring activities in Italy for 94 entrepreneurs in collaboration with Seniores Italia Lazio, CESES member organisation, through a third dedicated Start-up mentoring strand within its broader mentoring

programme. These activities introduced participants to fundamental concepts of general and business economics, encouraged critical analysis of social, economic and technological contexts, and provided practical methodologies for the development of start-up projects.

12 senior expert volunteers supported participants in understanding how to transform ideas into structured projects, strengthening analytical thinking, problem-solving skills and entrepreneurial awareness. The mentoring activities contributed to building a solid foundation for future entrepreneurial pathways and self-employment opportunities.

Spain

In Spain, CESES delivered entrepreneurship-focused mentoring activities in collaboration with SECOT, CESES member organisation, aimed at strengthening entrepreneurial initiative and project planning skills among vocational education students. 14 senior volunteers introduced participants to basic entrepreneurship concepts, including opportunity identification, business model thinking and simple project development methodologies as well as digital competency and energy efficiency.

Through practical and interactive sessions, seniors shared tools and real-life experience to encourage creativity, initiative and critical thinking. These mentoring actions helped 267 participants explore entrepreneurship as a viable professional pathway, complementing employability-focused training and supporting informed career decision-making.

iv. MAB Platform: consultations, meetings, number of matches/mentees and mentors engaged

In addition to the national mentoring initiatives, CESES continues to manage the MAB platform, which facilitates cross-border mentoring between senior experts and young people across Europe. The platform enables a broader reach of mentoring

activities, connecting experienced volunteers with students and young professionals beyond their own countries.

In 2025, the CESES Secretariat, secured the approval for the creation of a new MAB hub in Estonia, in collaboration with Golden League, a CESES member organisation, and the University of Tallinn. The cooperation agreement between the partners was formally approved and the implementation of this hub involved a series of coordinated activities, including:

- Collaborative meetings to define processes and objectives
- Development of promotional materials and their translation into Estonian
- Training of senior volunteers to become effective mentors for young people
- Registration and onboarding of participants through the MAB platform
- Preparation of the registration and onboarding procedures, with the matching phase and implementation of the mentoring activities set to start in 2026.

While the promotion of the initiative has already begun, the matching process, as well as the implementation of the mentoring activities, will start in 2026 in alignment with the academic calendar.

This initiative strengthened CESES' capacity to deliver high-quality mentoring across borders, expanded opportunities for youth engagement, and further reinforced the intergenerational exchange of knowledge and experience across the European network.

3. POLICY & ADVOCACY

CESES' advocacy work has consisted of ongoing efforts in different areas, such as contributing to public consultations opened by European institutions, creating policy papers, and collaborating with other networks that allow us to join forces and exert greater pressure to achieve a greater impact of senior volunteering and greater visibility and representation of senior experts at the institutional level.

a. Advocacy through EU Networks: CEV and the Erasmus+ Coalition

As a member of the Centre for European Volunteering (CEV), CESES contributed to the network's wider advocacy efforts by bringing forward the perspective of senior volunteers, helping to promote a more supportive legal framework, stronger protection, and greater visibility for volunteers, and senior volunteers in more concrete, across Europe.

In close cooperation with CEV, CESES also continued to advocate for a more inclusive European Solidarity Corps, encouraging the European Commission to consider opening the programme to seniors, whether as mentors or in supporting roles alongside young volunteers. Such an approach would not only recognise the value of senior expertise but also reinforce intergenerational cooperation within one of the EU's flagship volunteering programmes.

Moreover, CESES contributed to several advocacy initiatives coordinated by CEV. This included participation in Civil Society Europe working groups, particularly those addressing challenges related to EU funding, scrutiny mechanisms and the shrinking civic space. CEV and its network, including CESES, also remained engaged in wider civil society dialogues through the EESC Liaison

Group and the Conference of INGOs ensuring that the perspective of senior expert volunteers was represented across multiple policy platforms.

Through CEV, CESES was also involved in a broad range of public consultations launched under the European Commission's Have Your Say framework, as well as in advocacy processes related to the European Solidarity Corps, where CESES continued to underline the importance of including senior volunteers in mentoring and support roles. These collaborations strengthened CESES's contribution to shaping a more supportive European policy environment for volunteering, intergenerational cooperation and civic engagement.

On the other hand, in 2025, CESES continued its active participation in the Erasmus+ Coalition, a joint initiative co-led by the Lifelong Learning Platform (LLLP) and the European Youth Forum (EYF), created to advocate for a strong and well-funded European Union programme in the fields of education, training, youth, and sports.

As part of this coalition, CESES attended four in-person sessions in Brussels, representing the community of senior experts who provide guidance, training, and education to young people. CESES also contributed to discussions on the design and implementation of the Erasmus+ programme, as well as related EU financial decisions, including the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) negotiations, where the Erasmus+ Coalition plays an influential role.

b. Participation in Public Consultations and Letters

As part of CESES's advocacy work to strengthen the voice of senior expert volunteer, this last 2025, CESES contributed to the European Commission's Call for Evidence on the upcoming EU Strategy on Intergenerational Fairness, emphasising the need for a more balanced and inclusive approach to intergenerational policy-making. CESES highlighted that intergenerational fairness should not focus exclusively on younger generations, but must also

recognise older persons as both beneficiaries and key contributors to Europe's future.

The feedback underlined the importance of intergenerational mentoring, senior volunteering, and lifelong active citizenship as essential tools to strengthen social cohesion, foster mutual learning and support both youth and older adults. CESES also calls for greater awareness of the potential of senior expert volunteers and encourages the Commission to mainstream intergenerational cooperation across all relevant EU policies.

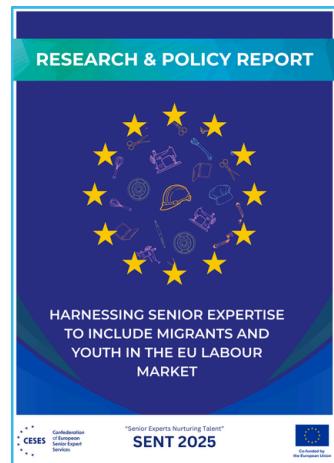
Alongside its official submission, CESES shared its Policy Paper on Intergenerational Cooperation and invited member organisations to either provide their own contributions or align their feedback with CESES's position to ensure that the perspectives of senior expert volunteers were thoroughly represented in the consultation process.

On another note but regarding CESES advocacy work, CESES co-signed the Civil Society Europe Open Letter calling on the European Commission to refrain from withdrawing the European Cross-Border Associations (ECBA) Directive. By joining this collective appeal, CESES supported wider civil society efforts to safeguard an enabling environment for cross-border cooperation and to defend the role and recognition of non-profit organisations across the EU.

c. Research & Policy Report on “Harnessing Senior Expertise to Include Migrants and Youth in the EU Labour Market”

In October of this year, this research and policy report was completed, exploring how senior expert volunteers can help address persistent labour market inequalities faced by migrants and young people across the European Union. Developed through desk research and consultations with the CESES membership, it examines how the experience and expertise of senior professionals can support upskilling, mentoring, and social cohesion amid demographic change, skills shortages, and increased migration.

Aligned with key EU initiatives such as the Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion and the European Education Area, the report offers practical insights and policy recommendations to strengthen inclusive labour market participation for migrants and youth. It is available through our Resource Centre on the CESES website.



d. Study Visit in the EU Institutions - The Parliamentarium

On 10 December 2025, CESES organised a study visit to the EU institutions, bringing a group to the Parliamentarium, the official visitors' centre of the European Parliament. The visit offered participants an engaging opportunity to learn about the history of the European Union, to explore how the European Parliament works and understand its role within the wider EU institutional framework.



Throughout the visit, participants interacted with multimedia displays, immersive installations, and educational tools that illustrated the evolution of the European project, the work of Members of the European Parliament, and the impact of EU legislation on citizens across Europe.

The study visit provided valuable context for strengthening participants' involvement in European initiatives and enhancing their capacity to contribute to their organisations' work at EU level.

4. DISSEMINATION, EVENTS & COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

As part of CESES' mission to raise awareness of the value of senior expert services and the contribution that senior volunteers make to society through their experience, expertise and knowledge, CESES implemented a wide range of dissemination and communication activities throughout 2025. These actions aimed to reach diverse audiences across Europe and to maximise the visibility and impact of the SENT programme.

Dissemination efforts were carried out through the CESES website, publicly available resources, and targeted social media campaigns, alongside the organisation and collaboration in events focusing on the role of senior expert volunteers in the professional development of young people and migrants, as well as other events closely aligned with CESES' mission and strategic objectives. In addition, CESES actively attended and contributed to external events and conferences, further extending its outreach. Through this multi-channel approach, CESES successfully reached thousands of citizens across Europe in 2025, strengthening awareness of senior volunteering and intergenerational cooperation.

a. Website and Online Resource Centre



Throughout 2025, the CESES website continued to serve as a central hub for information, visibility and public engagement for the SENT programme. Following the complete redesign introduced last year, the site has remained an accessible and user-friendly platform, allowing visitors to easily navigate CESES' activities, news and resources. The Online Resource Centre, which houses digital reports, publications and documentation from our member organisations, has been regularly updated with new SENT-related materials, ensuring transparency and offering the public a comprehensive overview of the programme's outcomes. Additionally, the News section has been consistently maintained with articles, announcements and social media updates, strengthening the connection between our online presence and the work carried out across Europe. Together, the website and Resource Centre have enhanced CESES' ability to reach a wider audience, support knowledge sharing and highlight the impact of senior expertise within the SENT framework.

b. Events

i. “How to Bridge the Intergenerational Digital Divide” (Brussels, Belgium)

The event “How to bridge the intergenerational digital divide” took place on 28 October 2025 at the CESES office in Brussels, bringing together 38 participants from 6 different countries: Italy, Germany, Belgium, Spain, Cyprus and Poland, including young leaders, senior experts, and key stakeholders. The session explored how digital tools and skills can foster stronger intergenerational collaboration and mutual learning across Europe.

The discussion featured three invited experts representing different perspectives on the topic with Ismael Paez Civico, CESES Executive Director, acting as moderator.

Andrew Jacobs (CESES Senior Advisor) shared the point of view of senior professionals and volunteers; Zia Perko (Board Member,

Connect International) brought insights from the field of digitalisation and youth participation; and Alexiane Terrochaire (Vice-President, JEF Europe) represented the perspective of young people.

Together, they engaged in a fruitful and inspiring exchange on how digitalisation can strengthen collaboration between generations, promote inclusion, and open new opportunities for both young and senior communities. The speakers shared their personal experiences, examples of good practices from their organisations, and concrete ideas to bridge the digital divide through mentoring and volunteering.



The event encouraged participants to reflect on how digital transformation can become a tool for empowerment rather than exclusion, and how intergenerational cooperation can enhance resilience in the face of technological change.

In the second part of the session, attendees were invited to take part in an open debate, sharing their own views and questions. The event concluded with a networking session, offering participants the opportunity to continue the conversation in a more informal and collaborative atmosphere.

ii. Research & Policy Report Presentation + series of webinars: “Harnessing Senior Expertise to Include Migrants and Youth in the EU Labour Market” (Brussels, Belgium)

On October 16, 2025, CESES hosted an audience of 39 participants - members, partners, and visitors to present the previously mentioned Policy and Research report “Harnessing Senior Expertise to Include Migrants and Youth in the EU Labour Market.” The event

highlighted the essential role that senior expert volunteers can play in bridging generational divisions and extending opportunities in the European job market.



Haytham Alhayek, a mentee from Palestine, and Felix Borremans, his mentor from Belgium, provided powerful testimonials about their mentoring collaboration and personal development.

Following the testimonials, an engaging panel discussion was held with Elisabeth Verniers, Head of Public Partnerships at DUO for a JOB; Andrei Frank, Policy and Advocacy Coordinator at the Lifelong Learning Platform (LLL); and Emmanuel Mossay, General Manager of the SIREAS Group. The panellists shared expert perspectives on skill development, inclusivity, job issues, and the advantages of intergenerational cooperation for Europe's workforce.



This event reiterated CESES' commitment to promoting social cohesion and inclusive employment solutions by using the richness of expertise that senior volunteers bring from varied backgrounds. Moreover, as part of the series of webinars/seminars on "Harnessing Senior Expertise to Include Migrants and Youth in the EU Labour Market", a webinar was held on 1 December with CESES members and within the framework of the MoMs to discuss the main topic of the value and contribution of senior volunteer experts in the integration of migrants into the labour market, with 12 participants.

iii. “La Scialuppa” in Turin, Italy

On 5 March 2025, CESES contributed to the event “La Scialuppa”, held in Turin with 53 participants, organised in cooperation with local partners including Vol.To and VSP Odv, both CESES member organisations. The conference focused on the prevention of usury and provided insights from experts working with vulnerable families and small enterprises facing financial hardship.

The event highlighted the crucial role of volunteering in early social prevention, strengthened cross-organisational cooperation in Turin, and showcased how senior volunteers contribute to addressing economic vulnerability through guidance, awareness-raising and support in accessing safe financial mechanisms.

iv. Regional Conference in Skopje: “Bridges of Experience: Boosting Senior Volunteering for Sustainable Development across the Balkans” (Skopje, North Macedonia)

On 24–25 November 2025, CESES participated in and co-organised the regional conference “Bridges of Experience: Boosting Senior Volunteering for Sustainable Development across the Balkans”, held at the Members of Parliament Club in Skopje, North Macedonia in collaboration with the Centre for European Volunteering (CEV), the Association for Sport and Volunteering (ASV) and the Institute for Good Governance and Euro-Atlantic Perspectives (IDUEP).

The two-day event brought together a total of 73 participants representing senior volunteering organisations, public authorities, civil society actors, and international stakeholders to explore how senior volunteering can contribute to sustainable development and stronger intergenerational cooperation across the Balkan region.



The conference opened with a dedicated workshop on the Volunteering law in North Macedonia with the Ministry of Labour and Economy and CSO representatives, followed by a welcome reception featuring keynote interventions of H.E. Michalis Rokas (EU Ambassador, EU Delegation in Skopje), Besar Durmishi (Minister of Labour and Economy, North Macedonia) and Gabriella Civico (Director, Centre for European Volunteering).



The second day combined an opening ceremony with a series of thematic panel discussions. CESES contributed actively throughout the day: moderating the first panel on the benefits of senior volunteering for individuals, society, and the economy with panellists including Ina Majko (Vice Minister of Health and Social Welfare, Albania), Lena Karnalova (Big Brothers Big Sisters Bulgaria) and Benjamin Arndt (Peace Corps), and leading the final interactive workshop on boosting senior volunteering in the Balkans, which concluded the conference with practical reflections and proposals for next steps. Additional panels addressed international cooperation in the context of IVY2026, as well as volunteering in sport as a bridge between generations, involving representatives from ministries, volunteering organisations, and international bodies. Across both days, the conference provided a meaningful space for dialogue, exchange of good practices, and strengthened collaboration with partners in the region, and was even mentioned by [**AlfaTV news**](#).

v. “Life as an Adventure Movie” (Tallinn, Estonia)

On 25 April 2025, CESES contributed to the international conference “Life as an Adventure Movie” in Tallinn, organised through the CESES network at the Estonian Film Museum involving 57 participants in total. The event gathered experts, policymakers and senior volunteers to discuss the evolving realities of ageing in Europe, including labour-market discrimination, the silver economy, lifelong learning and the contribution of older adults to society. CESES was represented by its President, Doris Bandín (video address), and Executive Director Ismael Páez Cívico, who highlighted CESES’ mission and the achievements of the SENT programme.



The conference featured presentations from economists, company representatives and labour-market specialists, as well as a dynamic panel on “overqualification syndrome”. Discussions emphasised the need for age-friendly employment practices, better recognition of senior expertise and innovative solutions to support independent living. The event strengthened CESES’s visibility in Estonia and reinforced cooperation with national stakeholders committed to promoting active and inclusive ageing.

vi. StraVol.To 2025 (Turin, Italy)

On 5 December 2025, CESES contributed to “StraVol.To 2025”, held in Piazza Bodoni and the historic city centre of Turin. Organised in collaboration with Volontariato Torino ETS (Vol.To), CESES member organisation, to celebrate International Volunteer Day, the event brought together 132 participants organised in 15 mixed-age terms, including volunteers from local organisations, senior experts, young citizens and Italian National Civil Service volunteers.

Participants took part in a dynamic city challenge to promote solidarity and volunteering, completing tasks such as photographic missions, street art actions, puzzles, micro-interviews with citizens, and short poetry or song compositions. These activities fostered intergenerational cooperation, collaboration, and public engagement, while making volunteering visible in the urban space and inspiring potential new volunteers.



The event reinforced local ties in Turin, demonstrated the influence older volunteers can have in promoting solidarity and active citizenship, and emphasised the critical role volunteering plays in creating intergenerational learning, civic engagement and community cohesion.



vii. Volunteering Fair 2025 (Vienna, Austria)



CESES actively participated in collaboration with SEA, CESES member organisation, in the 13th Volunteering Fair in Vienna (Wiener Freiwilligenmesse), held at Vienna City Hall, reaching an audience of approximately 74 participants and visitors.

Through its presence at the fair, CESES provided information on international volunteering opportunities for experienced professionals, engaged directly with citizens interested in social impact and promoted the role of senior experts in global development and knowledge transfer. The event offered a valuable platform to connect with new potential volunteers, strengthen public awareness and reinforce CESES' outreach within the Austrian volunteering ecosystem.

viii. Civic Engagement for Global Justice - Annual Meeting 2025 (Tulln, Austria)

The Annual Meeting 2025, held in Tulln, Austria, brought together senior volunteers, returnees and interested participants for two days of exchange and reflection under the theme “Power. Fair. Share – Civic Engagement for Global Justice.”

The event gathered 14 participants and combined interactive workshops and facilitated discussions addressing global inequalities, child labour and the importance of active citizenship. The meeting provided a space for reflection, shared learning and community building, reinforcing participants' understanding of global challenges and the role of civic engagement and volunteering in promoting social justice.



c. Active Participation

Throughout 2025, the CESES Secretariat actively participated in a wide range of events, conferences, workshops and policy dialogues across Europe. These occasions provided valuable opportunities to represent the senior expert volunteering community, strengthen cooperation with partners, contribute to thematic discussions, and promote the objectives of the SENT – Senior Experts Nurturing Talent programme.

CESES' attendance at these events also helped reinforce its visibility at European level, build new strategic connections, exchange good practices with stakeholders, and remain engaged in ongoing debates related to volunteering, intergenerational cooperation, education, youth, and labour-market inclusion.

Here below are the key events in which CESES took part during 2025 boost CESES impact on society and policy dialogue.

i. Mechelen Volunteering Fair

CESES actively participated in the Volunteering Festival in Mechelen, held in May 2025 open to the public and free of charge, as part of the city's programme as European Volunteer Capital 2025. CESES hosted an information stand, presenting its mission, the role of senior expert volunteers, and the SENT programme to visitors.

This event brought together more than 70 organisations working in the volunteering sector and offered a vibrant mix of info-stands, workshops and performances, making volunteering accessible and attractive to the general public of all ages.

ii. CEV Congresses - Spring & Autumn

The CEV Spring Volunteering Congress, held from April 1-3, 2025, brought together over 60 organisations dedicated to promoting and supporting volunteers and volunteering throughout Europe at the European, national, and regional levels. The event featured a varied group of speakers, including EU Commissioners and coalition leaders. CESES participated in network meetings, study visits in the Mechelen area, the eQval Final Conference, the GIVE Seminar (with 180 attendees), and the CEV General Assembly.

The CEV Autumn Volunteering Congress 2025 was held in Brussels, Belgium, from October 14 to 17. During the three-day event, CESES participated in the Slipstream Discussion Forum in the European Parliament, roundtable sessions, the CEV General Assembly, board

elections, and other seminars involving key EU Commissioners and volunteer groups.

iii. Civil Society Week in the EESC

Members of the CESES team attended Civil Society Week 2025 (17–20 March 2025), a four-day event featuring lively discussions and collaborative workshops on the theme “Strengthening Cohesion and Participation in Polarised Societies.” The event brought together a wide range of civil society stakeholders, providing space for critical debates, the exchange of best practices, and collaboration on solutions to promote social cohesion.

iv. European Employment & Social Rights Forum 2025: Skills for a Competitive Europe

The 2025 #EUSocialForum took place in Brussels from 5–6 March 2025, focusing on one of Europe’s most pressing challenges — rising labour and skills shortages coupled with declining productivity. The discussions explored how people can develop the skills needed to support a strong society and resilient economy, while ensuring Europe’s digital and green transitions remain globally competitive. The two-day event gathered more than 500 participants.

v. CONNECT’s Study Visit as part of EU4YOUTH2ACT project

On 28 October, CESES hosted a dynamic event in Brussels bringing together young participants, senior experts, and stakeholders to discuss how digitalisation can bridge the generational gap.

Moderated by Executive Director Ismael Paez Civico, the panel featured Andrew Jacobs (CESES Senior Advisor), Zia Perko (CONNECT International), and Alexiane Terrochaire (JEF Europe). They explored how digital tools foster collaboration, inclusion, and mutual understanding between generations. The discussion and

audience interaction reinforced the value of intergenerational dialogue in shaping a more connected and inclusive Europe.

And many more conferences, seminars and events organised by EU institutions or other organisations on topics related to and of interest to CESES, which the team attended:

vi. Countering Youth Euroscepticism in the WB: The Case of North Macedonia (**ECE** Brussels, the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom and **IDUEP** Institute)

viii. Conference “Turn up the volume for civil society!” (**EESC**)

x. Conference on intergenerational solidarity (**EESC**)

xii. Participation and civil dialogue after the European elections (**EESC**)

xiv. The Path to a Strong Erasmus+ Programme (**EYF**)

vii. Panel Discussion “The New Intergenerational Contract”

ix. Conference on “Protecting Europe’s most vulnerable through sustainable and affordable housing” (**EESC**)

xi. Invitation Public Hearing - Reducing barriers to inclusive entrepreneurship (**EESC**)

xiii. FutureTalks on “AI, VET and Intergenerational Fairness” (**EVBB**)

xv. LLLWeek 2025 - European Lifelong Learning Stakeholders’ Forum (**LLP**)

CESES’ track record of participation in European-level events has grown over the year, encompassing conferences, discussions, and talks beyond those mentioned above.

d. SENT 2025 Award Ceremony and Final Conference



The SENT 2025 Final Conference and Award Ceremony took place on 9 December 2025 at the European Parliament in Brussels, bringing together 27 participants from CESES member organisations, EU decision-makers, institutional partners, NGOs, companies and young people from across Europe.

The conference served as a key moment to conclude the final year of the SENT 2023–2025 framework programme and to collectively reflect on the broad range of activities, mentorship engagements and capacity-building efforts carried out by our members throughout the year. Participants had the opportunity to review the programme's milestones, discuss the outcomes of transnational cooperation between senior experts and local communities, and assess the overall impact generated by the SENT grants. The event also offered space for strategic exchanges on how CESES' network can continue to adapt its support to emerging societal and economic needs, particularly in the areas of youth mentoring, SME development and cross-border knowledge sharing. This year's gathering held special significance as CESES celebrated its 25th anniversary, marking 25 years of mobilising senior expertise to strengthen Europe's economic and social cohesion and reaffirming the organisation's long-standing commitment to intergenerational collaboration.

The event was followed by the SENT Awards 2025, which honoured outstanding initiatives carried out by CESES member organisations. The awards recognised excellence in three categories:



Organisation with Best Support to SMEs, Entrepreneurs, Organisations and Institutions

“Simple Comme Numérique”
by **ECTI**

Organisation with Best Mentoring and Support to Young People

“The MESTIERI Programme”
by **Seniores Italia Lazio**



Organisation with Best Outreach & Dissemination Initiative

“SempreVerdi/EverGreen”
by **Volontariato Torino**

By showcasing impactful projects and celebrating the achievements of committed senior experts and their partner organisations, the ceremony highlighted the strength of intergenerational collaboration within CESES and reaffirmed the network's mission to foster talent, innovation and cooperation across Europe.

This was then concluded with the **CESES Recognition Awards**, a ceremony to celebrate some of the founding members of CESES, notably Susanne Nonnen (SES), Lucila de Baez Tinturé (SECOT) and Margrit Tappolet (SEC) for their outstanding contributions to both CESES and the greater senior volunteering community.



e. Social Media Campaign

As social media continues to play an increasingly central role in communication, maintaining a visible and active online presence is essential for our outreach and engagement efforts. Our current platforms include Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn.

We assess our digital impact primarily through impressions (a combination of views, engagement and page visits) reflecting how often our content is interacted with across these channels. The numbers here are approximate overview of our direct performance and do not include additional visibility generated by external partners or organisations sharing our activities:

Number of impressions across all social media platforms: **160,000+**

Number of posts shared on all social media channels: **170+**

Number of followers across our 3 social media accounts: **590+**

f. SENT 2025 Video Report

As part of our annual dissemination efforts, CESES produced the **SENT 2025 Video Report**, a visual summary showcasing the range of activities carried out by our member organisations under the SENT framework. The video brings together photos, short clips and on-the-ground snapshots submitted by members, illustrating how SENT funding has supported mentoring initiatives, SME support missions, training sessions, workshops and community-level engagement across Europe. Designed to offer an accessible, public-facing overview of the programme's impact, the video highlights real participants, senior experts in action, and the tangible outcomes of their work. It has been disseminated across CESES' social media platforms and website, helping to broaden outreach, demonstrate transparency, and engage both existing stakeholders and new audiences with the achievements of the SENT 2023–2025 programme.





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Ensemble, nous agissons



Cyprus Third Age
Observatory



25 YEARS



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