

Bridging Generations for Sustainable Peace: Advancing WPS–YPS Synergies in Rome

Event Report

On 8 June 2026, Sustainable Cooperation for Peace & Security (SCPS), together with the Women, Peace and Security Network-Canada (WPSN-C) and UN Women Italy, convened the side event [*“Bridging Generations for Sustainable Peace: Advancing the Intersections of Women, Peace and Security and Youth, Peace and Security”*](#) at the Sala Europa of the European Parliament Office in Italy in Rome. Bringing together approximately 70 participants from governments, international organizations, United Nations entities, academia, and civil society, the event provided a unique platform to explore how stronger synergies between the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agendas can contribute to more inclusive and sustainable peacebuilding.

The side event reflected the importance of international partnerships and cross-regional cooperation in advancing inclusive peacebuilding. Bringing together actors from Africa, Europe, North America, and international institutions, the event demonstrated how collaboration across regions and generations can strengthen efforts to build more inclusive and sustainable peace.

The event took place as a precursor to the [Eighth Capital-Level Meeting of the WPS Focal Points Network in Rome](#), convened by the Governments of Italy and the Philippines. Notably, SCPS was one of only two civil society organizations selected to organize an official side event dedicated to civil society, underscoring the growing recognition of the role of youth-led organizations in advancing peace and security at local, national, and international levels.

One of the events’ co-hosts, SCPS, also celebrates an important milestone this year: its fifth anniversary. What began as a small youth-led initiative has grown into an organization contributing to national, European, and global conversations on peacebuilding, dialogue, and inclusive security. The event therefore represented not only an opportunity to advance international dialogue but also to reflect on five years of commitment to meaningful participation and sustainable peace.

Importantly, the event took place during a particularly significant moment for the international peace and security community. The year 2025 marked the 25th anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on WPS and the 10th anniversary of Resolution 2250 on YPS. As the international community moves from commemoration to implementation, strengthening the intersections between these two agendas has become increasingly urgent.

Opening the event, Marjus Cevoli, Co-President of SCPS, welcomed participants and highlighted the need to move beyond parallel approaches to WPS and YPS. He recalled that the idea for the event emerged during the CSO–UN Dialogue in Geneva in December 2025, in conversation with Dr. Katrina Leclerc of the WPSN-C, emphasizing how international civil society cooperation can generate innovative policy discussions and foster new partnerships.

In his remarks, Cevoli also highlighted SCPS's engagement in global peacebuilding processes, including its role as a member of the Advisory Group of the [Second Independent Progress Study on YPS](#), mandated under the [Pact for the Future](#). The Study, which is expected to be presented to the UN General Assembly in September 2026, represents an important opportunity to strengthen the implementation of the YPS agenda globally.

Diletta Pasqualotto, representing the UN Women Italy Youth Committee, delivered opening remarks on behalf of UN Women Italy, reaffirming the importance of intergenerational dialogue and youth engagement in advancing gender equality and peace.

The keynote address was delivered by H.E. Luca Fratini, Coordinator for WPS, YPS and Mediation Policies, and Deputy Director for UN and Human Rights at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. His intervention highlighted Italy's growing commitment to both the WPS and YPS agendas, including the forthcoming adoption of Italy's first National Action Plan on YPS, an important milestone for the country and a significant contribution to global efforts to institutionalize youth participation in peace and security.

Moderated by Darya Majidi, President of UN Women Italy, the panel discussion brought together distinguished experts and practitioners from different regions and sectors. Dr. Katrina Leclerc, Chair of the WPSN-C, joined online and reflected on the importance of strengthening institutional linkages between the WPS and YPS agendas. Simone Mbodé Diouf, former African Union Youth Ambassador for Peace for West Africa and current Deputy Chair of the AU Advisory Panel on Democratic Elections and Governance, shared perspectives on youth leadership, governance, and inclusive peace processes across Africa.

Cristiana Carletti, Professor of International Public Law at Roma Tre University and expert at the Interministerial Committee for Human Rights of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, provided insights into the development of policy frameworks and National Action Plans. Gala Ivkovic, Board Member of Rondine International PeaceLab and Rondine d'Oro, emphasized the transformative role of education, dialogue, and intergenerational leadership in peacebuilding. Sara Jouhari, Co-President of SCPS, highlighted the importance of investing in leadership, education, and economic opportunities for young women as a strategic investment in peace and security.

Closing reflections were delivered by H.E. Jacqueline O'Neill, former Canadian Ambassador for WPS and current Director of Transnational Conflict Analysis and Support at Global Affairs Canada. The event concluded with closing remarks by H.E. Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda, Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director of UN Women, who underscored the importance of ensuring that women and youth are recognized not merely as beneficiaries of peace processes but as indispensable actors in building sustainable peace.

Throughout the discussion, participants emphasized that the WPS and YPS agendas should not be understood as parallel frameworks, but rather as mutually reinforcing approaches to peacebuilding. Young women were repeatedly recognized as standing at the intersection of both agendas, often facing multiple layers of exclusion while simultaneously driving innovation, leadership, and social transformation within their communities.

Several key messages emerged from the event:

First, sustainable peace requires integrated, inclusive, and intergenerational approaches that combine experience and innovation. Peace is not a static outcome but a continuous process built through trust, dialogue, and relationships across all levels of society.

Second, there is an urgent need to move beyond symbolic participation toward meaningful leadership and shared decision-making power for women and youth. Participants stressed that women and young people must be involved not only in implementation but also in agenda-setting, mediation, and policy design.

Third, while National Action Plans remain critical tools for advancing both WPS and YPS, greater alignment between these frameworks is needed. Effective implementation requires stronger monitoring mechanisms, adequate financing, and local ownership. Municipalities, grassroots organizations, and diaspora communities were identified as key actors in localizing peacebuilding efforts.

Fourth, participants highlighted that chronic underfunding of women-led and youth-led organizations remains a major obstacle to sustainable peace. Increased investments in peace education, economic inclusion, social cohesion, mentorship, and leadership development are essential to building resilient societies.

Finally, the event reaffirmed the indispensable role of civil society in bridging policy and practice, amplifying local voices, and ensuring accountability. In a context of shrinking civic space and increasing global challenges, stronger partnerships between institutions, international organizations, and civil society are more necessary than ever.



Ultimately, the side event reaffirmed a simple but powerful message: sustainable peace cannot be built without women and youth. Bridging generations is not merely a matter of representation—it is a strategic imperative for building more inclusive, resilient, and peaceful societies.

The event also contributed to the localization of the WPS and YPS agendas by facilitating their operational translation from the global to the local level. It strengthened the dialogue between SCPS and the Municipality of Mantua, consolidating a partnership aimed at advancing the implementation of both agendas within the local context and at enhancing the role of local authorities in peacebuilding, youth participation, and the promotion of gender equality. Furthermore, the initiative helped raise the national and international profile of a civil society organization founded and deeply rooted in the Mantua area, demonstrating how expertise developed at the local level can make a meaningful contribution to major international policy dialogue and decision-making processes on peace and security.

This collaborative event stands as a testament to the continued commitment shared by the co-hosting organizations to advancing dialogue, strengthening partnerships, and ensuring that women and young people are not merely invited to the table but uplifted to shape the future of peace and security.

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