

# Future Generations Summit

## Event Report

Hosted at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, in Lisbon, Portugal  
26 March 2026

The SOIF logo is a white circle containing the letters 'SOIF' in a bold, black, sans-serif font. It is positioned in the bottom left corner of the page, partially overlapping the abstract brushstroke graphic.

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# Executive Summary



The Future Generations Summit brought together government officials, civil society leaders, academics, youth representatives, and international experts to advance Portugal’s long-term governance and intergenerational fairness agenda.

The event was organized by the School of International Futures (SOIF), Futura Foundation, and ZERO, in partnership with PLANAPP, Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Oikos, Transformative Times (by With Company), L3P | Universidade de Aveiro, and Comunidade Lidera, and hosted at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. It featured institutional messages from the United Nations, the European Commission, the Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development, and the Spanish Hub for Future Generations, alongside Portuguese speakers, and four parallel working sessions. This report captures the collective intelligence of the Future Generations Summit, with a detailed session-by-session record of the summit’s insights. It is accompanied by another document, titled “Expanding the Portuguese Hub for Future Generations: A Roadmap”, which is grounded in what participants shared, debated, and imagined together during the summit. The next steps belong to all of us.

## Context and urgency

The summit took place at a pivotal moment:

- The UN Pact for the Future and Declaration on Future Generations (2024) provide a global framework for implementing a long-term governance model to advance intergenerational fairness.
- The EU’s first-ever strategy on intergenerational fairness was released this March.
- Portugal’s PLANAPP is developing national scenarios and a vision for 2050.

Yet, the intergenerational social contract is under strain: youth pessimism is rising, housing and employment insecurity fuel populism, and political decision-making remains trapped in short-term cycles. As Cat Tully, founder of the School of International Futures, framed it:

**“In the next two years, we are locking in decisions that have huge consequences in terms of policymaking. So, the long term is not long term, it is actually urgent now institutionally.”**

Cat Tully - School of International Futures

## Key messages

The richness of the summit’s discussion is captured in detail in the following pages, but these are the key cross-cutting messages taken away from speakers and participants’ contributions throughout the event.

<b>Ecosystemic approach</b>	Success requires three forces working together: (i) mobilized civil society; (ii) champions inside institutions, and (iii) engaged politicians.
<b>Bipartisan potential</b>	The long-term governance and intergenerational agenda have the potential to transcend political divides when framed as ancestral responsibility.
<b>Culture is infrastructure</b>	Storytelling, imagination, and art are not soft additions but essential tools for whole-of-society change.
<b>Investment in youth agency</b>	From the first cycle all the way to university level, education must build civic agency and meaningful participation, not just academic knowledge.

<b>Prioritise foresight literacy</b>	Without foresight literacy, the long-term governance and intergenerational fairness agenda will always lack human capital and buy-in.
<b>Strengthen civil society</b>	Organisations currently operate in parallel, not in concert. Civil society must be properly financed and engage in a coherent movement to increase results.
<b>Prototype across different levels</b>	Small-scale experiments in towns and villages, tested and evaluated with communities, are as important as developing comprehensive national instruments.

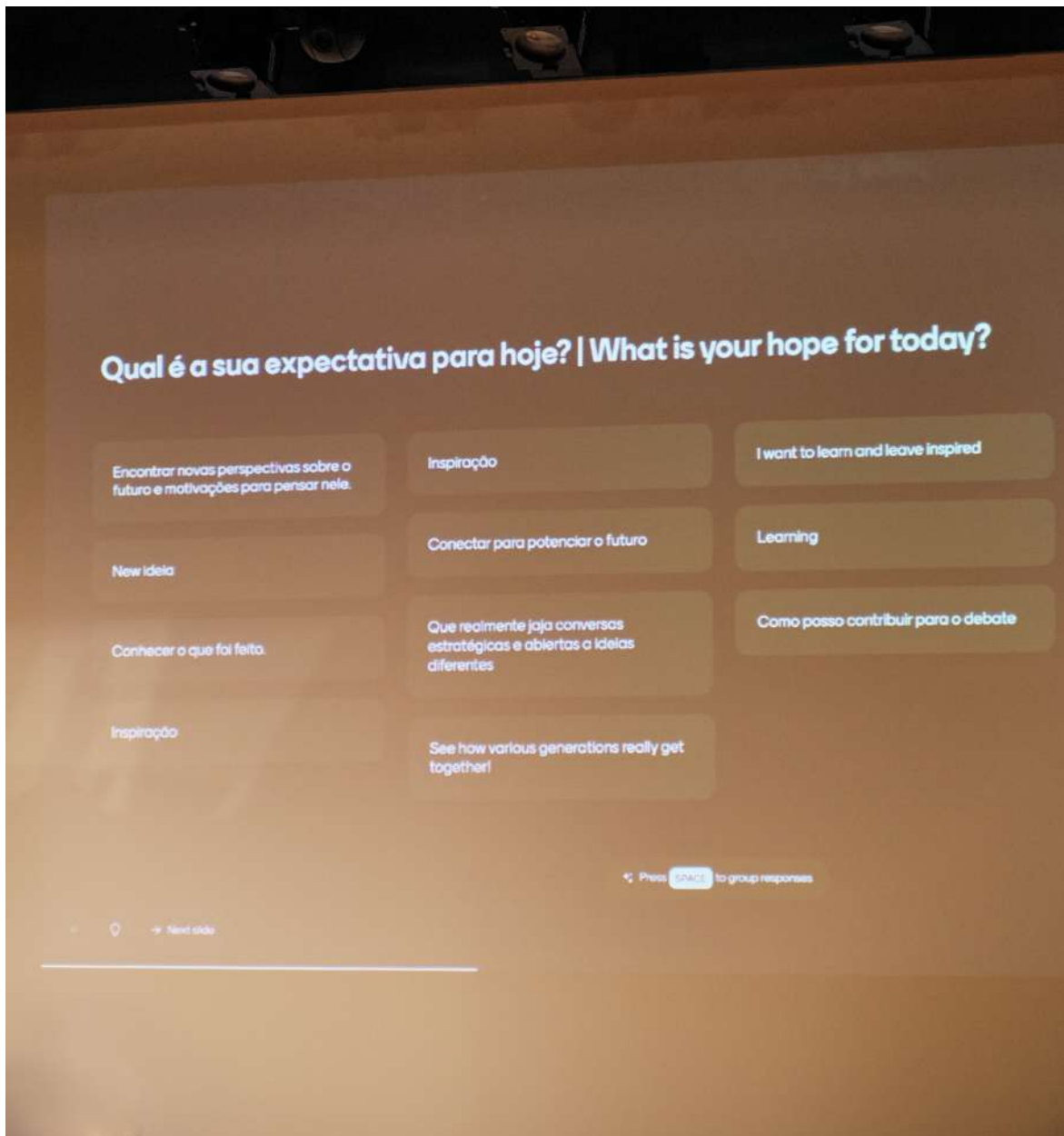
## Emerging ideas for action (2026-2030)

Through best practice sharing, and voicing needs, challenges, and dreams, several action points emerged across speakers' interventions, questions from the audience, and work group discussions.

<b>Expand the Future Generations Hub</b>	A coordination platform, network, or hub is needed to make communication and efforts coherent across actors in the ecosystem. The current Future Generations Hub in Portugal can be expanded to fulfill this function.
<b>Build foresight literacy</b>	Futures thinking and foresight literacy must be embedded across the educational system and among institutional leaders and politicians throughout the political spectrum.
<b>Develop a national foresight narrative</b>	Use participatory and storytelling methods to collect people's stories, imaginations, and visions to build a national foresight narrative rooted in Portuguese culture and collectively owned.
<b>Intergenerational governance experiments</b>	Bring the long-term governance and intergenerational fairness principles into practice at the local level, piloting experiments in municipalities before national roll-out
<b>Portuguese Observatory of Intergenerational Fairness</b>	Inspired by the Spanish example, launch a Portuguese Observatory of Intergenerational Fairness to assess policies and practices across governance, economy, environment, and social cohesion against shared metrics.
<b>Adopt one legislative instrument</b>	Draft, advocate for, and approve at least one legislative instrument obligating the government to account for intergenerational impacts.

**Connect internationally**      Connect Portugal’s agenda to the SOIF’s Global Hub Network and to the EU IGF strategy, positioning the country among the pioneers in national implementation.

On the following pages, there is a detailed report of what was discussed at each point of the summit’s agenda and the specific actionable ideas that emerged from the conversations. Besides serving as a documentation of a vibrant event, they also form the basis of what is being proposed in this report’s accompanying document “Expanding the Portuguese Hub for Future Generations: A Roadmap.”



# Session-by-session event report

## 1. Welcome and Opening

**Speakers:** Graça Fonseca (former Minister of Culture, Chief Imagination Officer at Futura Foundation), Susana Fonseca (Vice-president at ZERO), Cat Tully (Founder of the School of International Futures)



The summit opened at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon with three co-hosts setting the emotional and strategic tone for the day. Graça Fonseca expressed that the event marked the beginning of a movement to bring the future into the present in a more conscious way, for organisations, governments, and individual lives. She reflected on her own advocacy from 2015 onward, noting that more than a decade later, the conditions for this movement were finally converging.

**"I hope that today is the beginning of something, of a movement that brings the future in a more present and more conscious way, not only for organisations, for governments, but also for our life."**

Graça Fonseca - Futura Foundation

Susana Fonseca welcomed participants and described the summit as the realisation of a long-held dream to unite diverse voices working on future generations and long-term thinking. She acknowledged the anxiety many people feel when consuming the news,

describing a daily sense of navigating the unexpected, but argued this made it even more important to value existing structural efforts and grassroots initiatives.

**"It is very important that we work together because we have to pass this message. This nebula in which we live today, of so much that seems negative and unconstructive, it is even more important to reinforce this message."**

Susana Fonseca - Zero

Cat Tully provided the international framing. She recalled that nearly three years earlier, in the same room, a five-year Gulbenkian programme on intergenerational justice had concluded with a warning: as Portugal approached its 50th year of democracy, the intergenerational social contract was fracturing across climate, housing, employment, and public finances. She positioned Portugal within a global wave of innovation in long-term governance, noting that SOIF supports countries from Spain to Kenya and Australia to Brazil with foresight methodologies and long-term assessments.

**"Our hope as organisers is very simple. Today helps us to give an impulse, a step forward."**

Cat Tully - School of International Futures

### Actionable takeaways

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Have a network or platform to build on the current momentum around futures and foresight and connect the diverse actors already working on intergenerational issues in Portugal to potentiate results.

Frame futures thinking and intergenerational thinking as antidotes to the current sense of hopelessness, especially among youth.

Position Portugal as a learning hub within the global network of countries experimenting with long-term governance.

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## 2. Institutional Addresses

### Themba Kalua - United Nations

**Role:** Director, Pact for the Future Implementation, UN Secretary-General's Executive Office (video message)

Kalua delivered a direct message from UN Headquarters in New York. He opened by stating an uncomfortable truth: the world is still failing future generations. Decisions on climate, technology, peace, security, and natural resources carry profound long-term consequences, yet are routinely taken without sufficient regard for those who will inherit them. He framed the Declaration on Future Generations, adopted as part of the Pact for the Future, not as another UN outcome document but as a call to action, since what matters now is national implementation. The Declaration affirms that safeguarding the needs and interests of future generations is a duty, calling for better use of foresight and science, long-term impact assessments, and institutions that are anticipatory, adaptive, and responsive.

Critically, Kalua emphasized that the real impact will not come from New York but at the national level, through future-oriented budgeting, intergenerational oversight bodies, meaningful youth participation, and environmental stewardship embedded in national systems. He underscored the essential role of civil society in ensuring that long-term thinking survives political cycles.

**"Civil society has a critical role to play. You bring accountability, you drive innovation. And you can help ensure that long-term thinking does not disappear within short political cycles."**

Themba Kalua - UN Secretary-General's Executive Office

#### Actionable takeaways

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Use the UN Pact for the Future and Declaration as concrete instruments to anchor national advocacy and legislative proposals.

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Integrate foresight into policymaking as a standard future-oriented governance process.

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Build multi-stakeholder partnerships connecting civil society, government, academia, and youth to drive implementation.

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## Deša Srsen - European Commission

**Role:** Member of Cabinet, Commissioner for Intergenerational Fairness, Youth, Culture and Sports (video message)

Srsen presented the EU's first-ever strategy on intergenerational fairness, released on 5 March 2026. She described it not as another policy paper but as the new intergenerational contract, underpinned by a concrete set of tools designed to change the mindset of policymakers and amplify young people's voices. She emphasised the process behind the strategy as much as the product: it was shaped through European Citizens' Panels, with some participants from the Lisbon room having directly contributed. Srsen stressed that strategies do not implement themselves. What happens next depends on policymakers, practitioners, and engaged citizens at European, national, and local levels.

**“Events like the one you are having here today are really where these things are happening, where the strategy is actually implemented.”**

Deša Srsen - European Commission

### Actionable takeaways

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Map and align Portuguese initiatives with the EU intergenerational fairness strategy to leverage funding and political support.

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Replicate the European Citizens' Panel model at Portuguese national and municipal levels for long-term policy design.

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Position Portugal as a pioneer in national implementation of the EU strategy, creating a demonstration effect for other member states.

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## 3. Portugal 2050 – Scenarios & Vision

**Speaker:** Pedro Manuel Saraiva, Director, PLANAPP (Centro de Planeamento e de Avaliação de Políticas Públicas)



Pedro Saraiva presented PLANAPP's work on long-term strategic planning for Portugal, framed by the metaphor of Almada Negreiros's declaration that he had always been the future. PLANAPP, only five years old, was born under António Costa's government and has been given further strength under subsequent governments, representing a rare example of policy continuity across political cycles. Saraiva described PLANAPP as a part of the government's brain that operates beyond the 8-second attention span that political pressure imposes on decision-makers.

He presented the identification of 9 mega-trends relevant to Portugal through 2050, developed through a highly participatory process that included a youth contest for texts and images about 2050. The results were sobering: young people do not hold an optimistic view of the future. Saraiva connected this pessimism to scientific evidence linking perception of insecurity about housing, jobs, and quality of life to the rise of populism globally. Saraiva noted that in countries where populism has arrived in power, the problems are not resolved, and insecurity persists while economic growth declines.

**"When I was 16, I thought much better of the future of my**

**country. The youth do not have a very optimistic view of what the world will be in 2050. This should also leave us concerned.”**

Pedro Saraiva - PLANAPP

As part of the REPLAN network PLANAPP is developing three scenarios for Portugal 2050, and a national vision built around three ambitions: Portugal as a welcoming country pleasant to live, work, invest and visit; a sustainably productive economy focused on productivity per hour worked rather than working more hours; and leadership in the energy transition, through ocean and space, leveraging Portugal’s geopolitical position. The vision positions Portugal as sustainably productive, resilient, and multi-layered.

### Actionable takeaways

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Embed youth foresight exercises systematically in the planning process, using contests and participatory methods to capture young people’s visions and concerns.

Link the PLANAPP scenarios and mega-trends to concrete intergenerational fairness metrics and oversight instruments.

Build a public engagement strategy around the Portugal 2050 vision, making it accessible and debated across society, not just within technocratic circles.

Address the insecurity-populism link directly in long-term governance, connecting housing, employment, and climate security to democratic resilience.

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## 4. Keynote: Dear Future, We Need to Talk

**Speakers:** Graça Fonseca (former Minister of Culture, Chief Imagination Officer at Futura Foundation) and Rui Quinta (Managing Partner, With Company)



Graça Fonseca opened by quoting Almada Negreiros: when he was born, all the solutions to save humanity had already been invented, all that was missing was saving humanity. She argued this captures Portugal's predicament: solutions exist, but the will to implement them at scale remains elusive. She challenged the audience to imagine asking, for every community decision, what its impact would be in 50 years, acknowledging that neither governments nor organisations are currently designed for this.

Graça used the example of the transformation of the Largo do Intendente in Lisbon, a neighbourhood considered dangerous throughout the 2000s, as an illustration. Through a political, social, and community project launched around 2010 when she was at the Lisbon Municipal Chamber, the area was rehabilitated and became a success story. So much so, that gentrification became a new challenge. She asked: could we have done it differently, with more foresight?

Another point she made was around the importance of culture and imagination across generations. She shared a powerful lesson from the Portuguese national participatory budget initiative, whose winning proposal was a call for more culture for all, suggesting that all people, when they turn 18, should receive access to cultural experiences across the country. She later transformed this into permanent public policy as Minister of Culture.

**"When we really develop the structures and we bring people to the imagination of what the country, the region, the city should be, people have very important ideas."**

Graça Fonseca - Futura Foundation

Graça also introduced the example of the Mar Menor in Spain, Europe's largest lagoon, which became the first non-human natural entity with legal personality in Europe. After massive fish die-offs in 2019, a teacher-activist launched a legislative initiative that gathered 640,000 signatures and was approved by the Spanish parliament. She framed it as an example of what collective power and organising can do to shape better futures for all.

Finally, she announced the Futura residence project in Lisbon, a building purchased to create a house, platform, and community for women under 35 starting their active lives, supporting extraordinary ideas that are usually not heard. She highlighted the stories of Eunice Foote, who discovered the greenhouse effect in 1856 but went unrecognized for 150 years, and Ada Lovelace, considered the first computational scientist, who described the first algorithm in history, as inspirational examples of women effectively shaping humanity's future.

Rui Quinta also showcased several participatory innovation projects in Lisbon and Portugal: from the Lisbon participatory budget tent on Rua Augusta where citizens contributed ideas via post-its, to the creation of Startup Lisboa's brand and strategy through a large-scale online community engagement, the Transformative Times, a global research lab inviting people to imagine 2025 through stories and drawings, and Future Days, a futures conference that grew from 300 to 600 participants and is now expanding to Copenhagen.

Rui also presented the concept of Where the Future Comes From, a three-dimensional mapping tool that connects past signals, present innovations, and future strategies, and shared a project for the UNDP exploring multi-species councils, asking why only humans make decisions about territories inhabited by other species, rivers, and ecosystems. He made an important provocation referencing the concept of the civilisation of the goldfish, noting that in algorithmic times, our attention span has been compressed to 8 seconds, compromising our capacity to participate and influence policy.

**"When brains play holes in their conceptualisations of yesterday and tomorrow, they tend to use material called today. We are dependent on the present, on the people we deal with, on the information we receive."**

Rui Quinta, quoting Daniel Gilbert - With Company

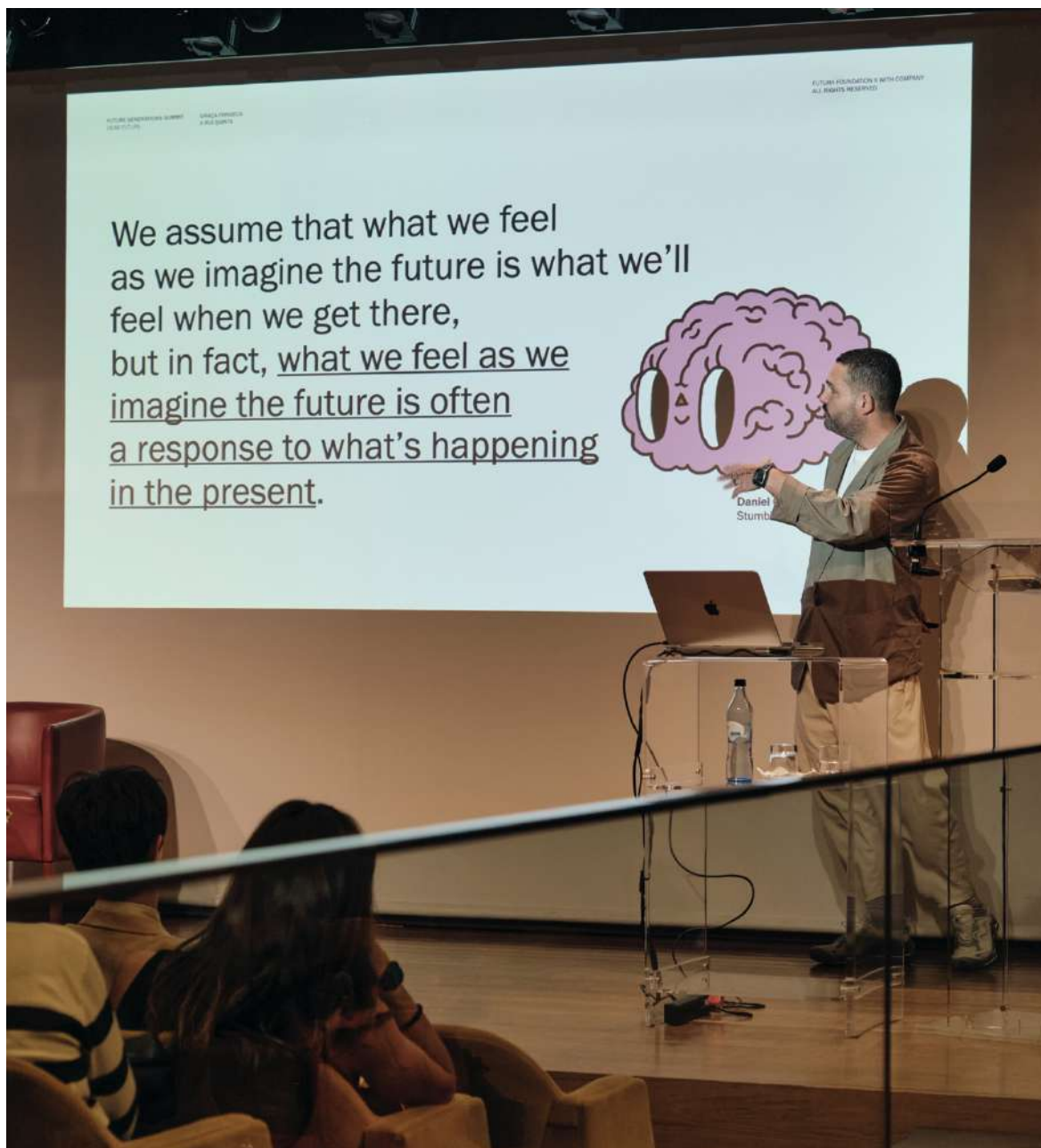
## Actionable takeaways

Design participatory processes and use creative, cultural and artistic methods (storytelling, design, prototyping) as core governance innovation tools, to attract people who would not engage with traditional consultation.

Explore rights-of-nature legal frameworks for Portuguese ecosystems, learning from the Mar Menor precedent.

Create platforms that specifically amplify the contributions of women and underrepresented groups in long-term governance.

Develop 50-year impact questions as a standard practice for community and policy decisions.



## 5. Generations in Conversation

**Panelists:** Thays Prado (Feminist Futures), Guilherme Catarino (Economics finalist, Universidade do Porto), Júlia Seixas (Pro-Rector for Sustainability, Universidade Nova de Lisboa)

**Moderated by:** Madalena Ravara, Comunidade LIDERA



Thays Prado argued that storytelling is fundamental for democratising futures thinking.

**"When we think about the long term, we understand that the reality we are living today is the result of the choices made by many generations that existed before us, and also that our decisions today will affect many human and more-than-human beings yet to be born."**

Thays Prado - Feminist Futures

She described her work with 100 adolescent girls from 35 countries, using a structured story-based futures methodology. They listed worrying and hopeful signals of change, projected future scenarios, collectively imagined a world that had achieved gender equality by 2054, and created recommendations for policy makers of what they needed to do in 30 years, so that their desirable future could become a living reality.

The process led to the creation of the Girls' Pact for the Future, which contributed to the inclusion of the term "adolescent girls" as a distinct population with specific needs and interests into the UN Pact for the Future and as agents of change in the Beijing Political Declaration in 2025. A concrete example of how the combination of storytelling and foresight can lead to intergenerational positive change. Thays emphasized that at a moment where young generations struggle to imagine hopeful futures, intersectional feminism serves as a starting point, a valuable template, for imagining worlds grounded in collective care and justice and equality for all.

Guilherme Catarino brought the perspective of a young person navigating systems not designed for his generation. He presented a stark statistic: while 28% of Portugal's population is under 30, only 3% of parliamentary deputies are in that age group. He argued that this tension undermines democratic representation and policy relevance. However, he noted positive developments: Portugal has a National Youth Council, municipal youth councils mandated by law, and is beginning to implement metropolitan and inter-municipal youth councils.

**"When they say that young people don't have experience in these positions, I don't think it's a lack of experience. I think we have different experiences that are not replaceable, they are complementary."**

Guilherme Catarino - Universidade do Porto

Catarino described his experience co-founding the Strategic Metropolitan Group for Youth in Porto, a two-year effort to plan a youth strategy across 15 sectors including housing, mobility, and culture. He emphasized that young people bring different experiences that are complementary, not contrasting, to older generations, and noted the importance of youth perspectives to address issues around social media, AI, and digitalisation, areas where older policymakers do not have enough experience and expertise. Catarino also engaged with a question on public debt, arguing that the issue is not so much public debt per se, but what the investment produces and who bears the long-term costs.

Júlia Seixas addressed the structural challenge of education. She described how, in mid-2024, three working groups of 40-50 people each were created in Portugal ahead of the UN Pact for the Future, one focused on effective youth integration in decision-making. The most powerful insight, she argued, concerned how education is structured from the very first cycle as too academic, with very little focus on civic agency.

She shared the story of a 12-year-old girl from a school in Braga who noticed the lack of a crosswalk in front of her school. Encouraged by her mother and supported by a teacher, she organised a group of students to petition the city council. The councillor, who had

never received young people in his office, was receptive, and the crosswalk was moved to the front of the school.

Júlia argued that the failure to build a sense of agency and power in young people from an early age in educational settings creates university students who are unaware of their own power.

**"On the one hand, students are angry, and on the other hand, they are not aware of the great power they have with them. Because no one told them that they had that power."**

Júlia Seixas - Universidade Nova de Lisboa

She noted that universities remain heavy, slow-changing structures where teachers feel they must teach everything they know, an impossible and counterproductive mindset. She called for a paradigm shift in higher education and noted the problem of bubbles: many youth organisations are growing, but many young people remain outside them.

The Q&A surfaced several important themes. An audience member raised the question of AI, referencing the AI 2027 storytelling exercise, and asked whether this generation might be the last to think about public policies in a purely human way, given the pace at which political decision-makers are delegating key decisions to artificial intelligent systems. Catarino responded by distinguishing between positive analysis (data-driven, where AI excels) and normative analysis (questions of justice and fairness, where AI cannot substitute human judgment because it simulates feelings without having them).

Another participant from the Institute of Public Policy (IPP) raised the challenge of civil society sustainability in Portugal, noting the absence of a philanthropy culture comparable to the United States and calling for greater synergies between civil society organisations and public support. He argued for a platform approach rather than isolated events.

A participant shared her 92-year-old grandmother's observation that, in the past, there was more love, prompting a reflection on whether solidarity and love can be institutionalized in an age of algorithmic control.

## Actionable takeaways

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Use story-based futures methodology to produce policy-ready outputs.

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Create intergenerational dialogue spaces that explicitly value and combine the different experiences of each generation.

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Redesign education from the first cycle all the way to university level to cultivate civic agency, practical problem-solving, and a sense of personal and collective power.

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Develop a clear framework for AI's role in governance.

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Build a sustainable civil society infrastructure for intergenerational justice, including funding models beyond project-based grants.

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## 6. Working Sessions

Participants chose one of the following working sessions to have deep dive discussions on key topics. The content below reflects what was reported back in plenary.

### Future Generations Law

**Hosted by:** ZERO and Oikos



This session focused on designing legislative and institutional frameworks to integrate long-term thinking into Portuguese political decision-making. Participants debated the creation of an independent entity, a provider or ombudsperson for future generations, whose primary role would be to protect the rights and interests of future generations by monitoring government and parliamentary decisions, establishing public communication, and mobilising society.

Key debates included: the institutional placement of such a figure; whether a single individual or a commission would be more effective given the diffuse and multi-dimensional nature of intergenerational issues; the risk that such a figure could become another burned institution in a country with declining institutional trust; and how to connect this entity with existing bodies like the Tribunal de Contas, Banco de Portugal, PLANAPP, and the Public Finance Council. The Wales model was referenced as inspiration, particularly its legislation based on national dialogue. Participants also discussed the need for intergenerational fairness evaluation of all proposed laws, impact assessments based on planetary boundaries, and annual reporting requirements to Parliament.

There was a debate about whether the priority should be institutional creation or strengthening civil society. Some argued that a provider figure would lack a clear object for citizen complaints and could become ineffective, while others saw it as essential for obligating the government to justify decisions with long-term consequences. The session converged on the importance of combining institutional instruments with a mobilised civil society platform.

### Actionable takeaways

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Draft legislative proposal for at least one instrument obligating the Government or Assembly of the Republic to account for intergenerational impacts in its four-year mandate, targeting adoption by 2030.

Study international cases (e.g. Wales Well-being of Future Generations Act and the Italian intergenerational fairness assessment law) as models for Portuguese adaptation.

Develop intergenerational impact assessments incorporating planetary boundaries as a legal instrument.

Create an annual State of Future Generations report to be debated in Parliament alongside the State of the Nation.

Build a coalition connecting PLANAPP, Tribunal de Contas, Banco de Portugal, and the Public Finance Council around shared intergenerational metrics.

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## Longevity Leadership

**Hosted by:** Center on Longevity Leadership – Universidade Católica Portuguesa

This session focused on the necessary flexibility of public policies in a longevity society. Discussions covered flexible work models, the approach to retirement age, partial reform options, and merit-based rather than longevity-based career progression. The core insight: in an ageing society, intergenerational collaboration requires rethinking work, retirement, and career structures fundamentally, not incrementally.

### Actionable takeaways

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Design partial and flexible retirement models that allow phased transitions rather than binary work-or-retire choices.

Develop intergenerational mentorship programmes connecting senior professionals with early-career workers.

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Advocate for merit-based career progression policies that value contribution over tenure.

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## What Happens Before a Signal?

**Hosted by:** Futura Foundation and Transformative Times

This workshop explored more-than-human approaches to governance, bringing animals, plants, nature, and technology to the centre of decision-making. Proposals included the regeneration of urban spaces using data and technological tools to understand other species, and the development of mechanisms of responsibility and representation for non-human entities. The session also addressed food systems transition, scientific development, and the value of prototyping ideas in small communities.

### Actionable takeaways

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Prototype a more-than-human urban governance experiment in a small Portuguese town or village, testing regeneration with community engagement.

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Design food system transition pilots that question taken-for-granted structures like meat-centric production.

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Invest in the development of technological tools for listening to and understanding other species in urban planning decisions.

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## Co-Imagining the Future City

**Hosted by:** L3P – University of Aveiro

This workshop engaged participants in a structured participatory foresight exercise centred on young people's perspectives in urban planning. Using a three-step methodology combining (i) scenario framing with real data from the Matosinhos civic lab; (ii) empathy mapping adapted for intergenerational thinking, and (iii) AI-assisted visioning through generative image tools, participants proposed the development of an innovative methodology capable of meaningfully engaging younger generations in democratic processes to shape their living environments.

Their 2030 vision is of a city where children and young people can travel independently and sustainably to schools and community spaces, supported by reduced car dependency, safe pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, and public space design that

reflects their needs. In order to achieve such vision, the immediate next step for 2026 is the implementation of the scenario materialisation phase across all six CONIFER civic labs in Portugal, Belgium, Hungary, Germany, and Poland, where AI-assisted participatory visioning will enable young people to co-create images of their desired urban futures to feed into municipal policy roadmaps.

### Actionable takeaways

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Launch a pilot foresight programme with children in six EU cities in 2026, co-creating urban scenarios.

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Develop locally coded and culturally adapted AI tools for participatory planning rather than relying on imported platforms.

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Create validation frameworks that legitimise youth contributions to urban planning on par with expert input.

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## 7. Wrap-Up: From Ideas to Impact

**Facilitated by:** Cat Tully - School of International Futures

### International Case Studies

#### Italy

**Speaker:** Luca Migliano - Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development (video message)

Luca Migliano shared Italy's remarkable trajectory over the past three years, describing what he called a large, big paradigm shift in terms of the recognition of future generations. The Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development (ASviS) is a very large network of around 300 members, ranging from civil society organisations to unions to business associations to universities and research centres, all working to promote sustainable development in Italy.

The first major change came in 2022, when the Italian government and parliament approved a constitutional reform introducing the interests of future generations into the constitution. This was not a minor amendment, it changed the first part of the constitution, the foundational section that defines the republic's principles. Remarkably, the vote was near-unanimous. Migliano emphasized that this bipartisan consensus was not accidental but reflected the universal resonance of the concept of being a good ancestor.

**"The topic of futures and future generations is still not political or politicised in Italy. You can find a large convergence about the concept of being a good ancestor, leaving our world to our nieces and nephews, sons and daughters. This resonates well with both parts of the parliament."**

Luca Migliano - Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development

The constitutional reform led to important downstream effects. In the following years, the High Court and tribunals issued significant jurisprudence and sentences, especially regarding climate change and environmental damage. These judicial decisions grounded the constitutional principle in concrete legal accountability, creating precedents that civil society and environmental organisations could use.

In October 2024, the parliament approved a law on intergenerational fairness assessment of all laws, published in November. This means that every new piece of legislation must now be assessed for its intergenerational impact. At the time of the

summit, Parliament was discussing the rules for how to apply this assessment in practice, with the bill being tabled by the government itself.

Migliano attributed much of this success to sustained civil society alliance work. ASviS created what they call Ecosistema Futuro, a spin-off partnership within the broader alliance, specifically focused on introducing future generations' rights, futures thinking, foresight, and intergenerational fairness into Italian culture and political debate. At the time of the summit, Ecosistema Futuro comprised around 90 organisations working together on this agenda.

The key lessons Migliano offered for Portugal were threefold. First, the bipartisan nature of the agenda is its greatest strength, since the moment it becomes identified with one political side, it loses its transformative potential. Second, the civil society ecosystem must be broad and diverse, encompassing not just environmental NGOs but unions, business associations, universities, and research centres. Third, constitutional and legislative change creates a cascading effect. Once the principle is enshrined in the highest law, it opens doors for jurisprudence, impact assessments, and institutional innovation that would otherwise be blocked.

### Actionable takeaways

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Frame the long-term and intergenerational fairness agenda as bipartisan from day one.

Start with constitutional or legislative anchoring.

Build a broad civil society ecosystem, not a narrow coalition.

Pursue legislative wins that the government itself can table.

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### Spain

**Speaker:** Maria Lorente-Perez - Spanish Hub for Future Generations

Maria Lorente-Perez presented the Spanish Hub for Future Generations, which she described as younger and smaller than the Italian experience but driven by the same urgency. The Hub launched in November 2024 with 17 organisations and 31 representatives and immediately began co-creating together both a shared vision and a collaborative strategy.

The vision they are building centres on a country that effectively protects all rights and guarantees for future generations, where there is equity for everyone, where sustainability and progress are complemented rather than opposed, intergenerational justice is always kept in mind, and institutions are resilient in the long term. Lorente-

Perez emphasized that the vision must also guarantee the present, because without securing today, tomorrow becomes impossible.

The Hub's strategy is structured around three pillars. The first pillar is activating the movement. She stressed that this must be a non-ideological movement, which she described as fundamental in Spain given its deeply polarised political landscape across national, regional, and municipal levels. The movement must not only work top-down through political parties but must also arise from below, from people and communities. As a concrete example, the Hub is part of the Social Forum, promoting campaigns, and collaborating with municipalities that want to start incorporating future-oriented visions into their planning.

The second pillar is technical evidence-based decision-making. Lorente-Perez argued that it is absolutely necessary for long-term decisions to incorporate intergenerationality, and for this, robust evidence is needed. The Hub is therefore launching an observatory of intergenerational equity in Spain that will produce the data and analysis needed to hold decision-makers accountable and inform legislative proposals.

The third pillar is political advocacy. The Hub is actively claiming the establishment of a specific defender for future generations at the national level in Spain, a figure that would serve as an institutional anchor for the intergenerational agenda.

**"It is a non-ideological movement, and this is fundamental in Spain. We don't just want to activate political parties, but to be a movement that also arises from above, from below, in people."**

Maria Lorente-Perez - Spanish Hub for Future Generations

Lorente-Perez showed a map of the Hub's member organisations and their interconnections, describing it as a space of collaboration, connection, and knowledge exchange. Each member organisation brings specific capabilities and resources to the network, creating a web of mutual support. She emphasised that the Hub is fundamentally about learning together and generating knowledge collectively, not about a single organisation leading from the top.

### Actionable takeaways

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Launch quickly with a small committed group, then grow.

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Declare the non-ideological identity explicitly and early.

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Structure strategy around three simultaneous pillars: movement-building, evidence, and advocacy.

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Create a measurement instrument early.

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Work at the municipal level simultaneously with national advocacy.

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## Closing Reflections

Cat Tully synthesised the day's themes through the lens of the ecosystemic approach, emphasising that success requires three components working together: a mobilized civil society, champions within organisations, and engaged politicians. She highlighted the Wales model, where legislation was based on national dialogue and one of the seven objectives was deeply embedded in culture and identity. She stressed that if this is to be a whole-of-society endeavour, getting the art and stories right is absolutely critical.

Tully also reminded the audience of the breadth of international experience available. She noted that 50% of all countries have constitutional duties to future generations in their system in one way or another, but they simply don't actualise them. The challenge is not inventing from scratch but learning from what works and adapting it. She referenced the Declaration on Future Generations as a synthesis of the ingredients for success in building future-focused systems.

**"Jim Dator, the grand god of foresight, says that any useful idea about the future has to, at first sight, appear ridiculous. Because it's challenging the status quo and powerful people like to discount that by ridiculing it."**

Cat Tully - School of International Futures

Engaging the audience on an imagination exercise for 2030, several proposals emerged:

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Expand the Portuguese Hub for Future Generations, building a more solid infrastructure connecting the great work being done across Portugal, modelled on but adapted from the Italian and Spanish examples.

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Develop a national narrative for long-term governance rooted in Portuguese culture, identity, and storytelling traditions.

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Commission a tour process to collect citizens' imaginations and stories about the future from every region, similar to the initiative collecting old village songs.

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Create intergenerational storytelling spaces where the oldest and youngest generations share and preserve stories and culture.

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Create decision making mechanisms that consider the perspectives of more-than-humans.

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## Reflections on what comes next

**Speaker:** Ana Fernandes, Technical Advisor at Portuguese Delegation to the OECD

Ana Fernandes was invited to close the discussion because of her unique vantage point: she combines international experience at the OECD with intimate knowledge of Portugal's civil society and institutional landscape. Cat Tully introduced her as an expert in embedding foresight in complex places, and her reflections were structured around four key points drawn from what she had heard throughout the day.

1. **Increase ambition and imagination:** if Portugal is to build a genuinely future-oriented governance system, it must give itself permission to imagine beyond what currently seems feasible.
2. **Address the knowledge infrastructure gap:** Portugal must invest time and energy in creating knowledge about foresight and futures thinking at the level of schools and universities. This is not just about adding a course or a module but building a whole-of-society perspective where foresight literacy becomes as fundamental as financial or digital literacy. Without it, the broader governance agenda will always lack the human capital it needs to succeed.
3. **Build an architecture of collaboration:** she noted that the words "network" and "platform" had been mentioned repeatedly throughout the summit, and she picked up on this as a signal of a shared need. She highlighted the importance of working together across organisations that currently operate in parallel and can start working in concert. Without a network architecture, the energy created during the summit risks dissipating quickly.
4. **Prototype:** foresight and intergenerational governance are inherently local as well as national, and prototyping at community level can build national identity and territorial cohesion.

Finally, she issued a call for narrative building.

**"I think the national narrative of why we need foresight is still missing. And we have to build that narrative."**

Ana Fernandes - OECD

Ana Fernandes claimed that without a compelling, shared story about why long-term governance matters for Portugal specifically, rooted in Portuguese culture, history, and identity, the institutional and legislative work will struggle to gain broad public support. Building that narrative, she argued, should be a central task of any emerging network or hub, and it should draw on Portugal's rich traditions of storytelling, poetry, and cultural expression.

**"If you want this to be a whole-of-society endeavour, getting the art, getting the stories right, is absolutely critical."**

Cat Tully - School of International Futures

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