



Resilient Ties starts from a simple premise: **resilience does not exist in isolation.**

In cultural work, resilience is often framed as an individual quality, characterised by adaptability, flexibility, strength, and endurance. This framing places responsibility on individuals while obscuring the structural conditions that shape their capacity to cope, act, and continue.

The concept of **Resilient Ties** shifts the focus from individual endurance to **relationships, structures, and shared responsibility.**

1. The individual perspective

You can't pour from an empty cup Resilience as capacity, not heroism

At the individual level, resilience is not about “being strong”, “coping better” or “being positive”. It is about having the capacity to remain present, engaged, and ethically grounded in conditions of pressure, uncertainty, and instability. Or in other words: having enough energy, safety, and support to do your work without breaking down.

Many cultural workers experience:

- burnout and constant stress
- emotional labour and moral pressure
- insecure jobs and project-based work
- exposure to political interference, censorship, or conflict
- accumulated fatigue and burnout
- blurred boundaries between work and life

Resilient Ties recognises that care, rest, and mental wellbeing are not personal luxuries.

They are basic conditions for staying in the field and meaningful cultural work.

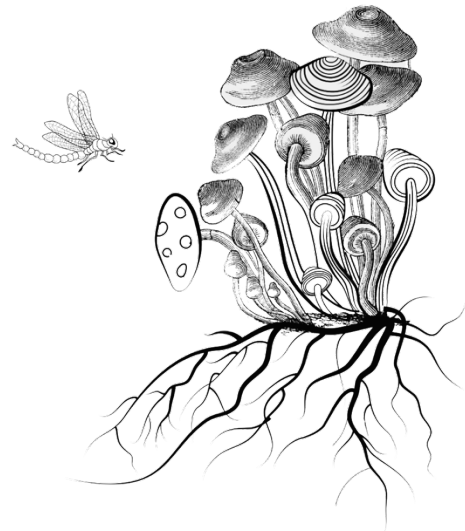
2. The collective perspective

Resilience as shared infrastructure

Resilience does not live inside one person.
It grows between people.

At the collective level, resilience depends on:

- trust between colleagues
- peer support and shared knowledge
- institutions taking responsibility
- fairer sharing of risk
- long-term relationships instead of one-off help



When support systems are weak, pressure falls on individuals.

When ties are strong, pressure can be shared.

> From this perspective, **resilience is not about absorbing pressure, but about redistributing it**. It depends on whether responsibility, risk, and care are shared or (silently) transferred onto the most vulnerable.

3. Resilient ties in Central Europe

Instability as a common condition

Across Central and Eastern Europe, cultural practitioners operate in contexts shaped by:

- shrinking civic space and political pressure,
- funding insecurity and institutional fragility,
- post-election transitions and periods of rebuilding,
- war, displacement, and long-term crisis.

In this landscape, resilience is a dynamic process, constantly negotiated between individuals, communities, institutions, and political realities.

Resilient Ties recognises that:

- some contexts carry a higher risk than others,

- some actors have greater capacity and protection,
- solidarity must therefore be aware of asymmetry.

4. From resilience to responsibility

Why ties matter

The shift from “resilience” to **resilient ties** introduces a question of responsibility:

- Who carries risk?
- Who absorbs pressure?
- Who has the ability to offer protection, continuity, or support?

Resilience is not about surviving at any cost. It is about staying connected, setting limits, and choosing not to leave people alone with pressure.

5. Why this matters now

In times of instability, resilience is often celebrated while systems remain unchanged.

Resilient Ties challenges this logic by reframing care, solidarity, and wellbeing as **political, structural, and relational practices**.

The conference uses this framework to explore:



- how individual wellbeing connects to collective capacity,
- how solidarity can move beyond emergency responses,
- how culture can contribute to social resilience without being instrumentalised.