



**European Committee  
of the Regions**



# Future of Europe My future



## Event type

Digital Local Dialogue

## Date

12/03/2021

## Initialising member

Władysław Ortyl  
President of the region (PL/ECR)

## Audience

Local university students and officials, plus general public. 31 people on Zoom call, with web stream viewed over 240 times.

## Organiser

Podkarpackie Region Office, Poland

## Partners

The Organisation of the Youth Senate

## Themes

The Future of Europe – "My Future: webinar on subsidiarity at local level for young people"



## Speakers

- **Mr Władysław Ortyl**  
Marshal of Podkarpackie Region,  
Member of the European  
Committee of the Regions (PL/ECR)
- **Professor Mieczysław Janowski**  
Former MEP and president of the  
region, currently professor at the  
Institute of Sociology at the  
University of Rzeszów
- **Ms Małgorzata Jarosińska-Jedynak**  
Deputy Minister, Ministry of the  
Funds and Regional Policy
- **Ms Ewa Leniart**  
Podkarpackie Voivodship Office
- **Ms Julia Majewska**  
European Commission, Directorate-  
General for Regional Policy
- **Ms Kamila Piech**  
Member of the Podkarpackie  
Region Assembly



## Key messages

### Key messages from the event include:

- There is a need for reinforced cooperation and dialogue among decision-makers.
- Local and regional authorities must play a key role in strengthening the voices of their citizens in European Union decision-making.
- Lack of confidence amongst many Polish citizens needs to be turned around so that they are better able to articulate what they need and cooperate with others to get it.
- EU subsidies can be viewed negatively, but instead should be seen as a key asset for the future of Europe.
- The EU institutions are there to support the development and implementation of policies which affect local and regional governments.
- The Conference on the Future of Europe is an important part of making sure these policies reflect the needs of citizens.
- The impact of the Conference will take several years to be felt, and its success will largely depend on how it is implemented locally and regionally.



## Press/Social media coverage

### Media coverage

[GOR Press Release](#)

### Website

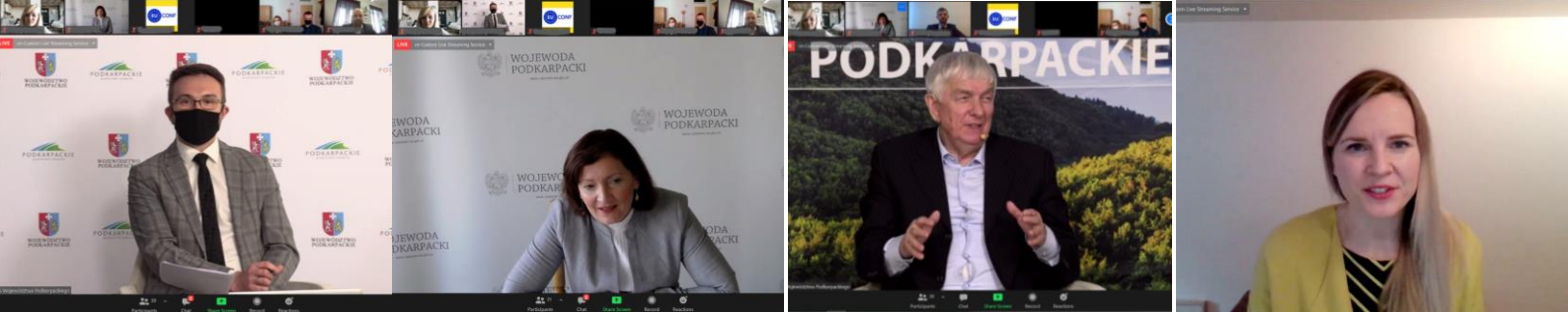
[FutureofEurope](#)

[YouTube recording](#)

### Social Media

[#EU\\_CoR](#)

[Facebook](#)



## Podkarpackie Region of Poland

The Podkarpackie Region lies in the far south-eastern corner of Poland, near the Carpathian Mountains. It is a largely rural area of mountains and woods, with a total population of just over two million. It is one of the poorest areas of the country, with a per capita GDP that is only 50% of the EU27 average (2018 figures), and the third lowest per capita GDP of all the Polish regions. It has been a major beneficiary of EU regional funds since Polish accession to the European Union (EU) in 2003.

This webinar was organised by the Podkarpackie Region Office, with the support of the Organisation of the Youth Senate, as part of the "Future of Europe" initiative, to bring the EU closer to citizens. It was targeted at university students, with the regional office specifically reaching out to certain university classes. A total of 31 people joined the event via Zoom, whilst the [livestream on YouTube](#) has had over 240 views. The event was held in Polish.

The three keynote speakers were each asked to address the questions: "How do you see the future of Europe?", "How can Europe help regions and cities?", and "Why does Europe matter for younger generations?"

## Wladyslaw Ortyl, Member of the European Committee of the Regions

The first keynote speaker, Mr Wladyslaw Ortyl, Member of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) and President of the Podkarpackie Region of Poland, gave a short presentation on the role of the CoR. He explained that a political priority of the local and regional authorities is to strengthen the voice of citizens in the decisions made at the European level, and highlighted the role of the CoR in the democratic processes of the EU.

## Professor Mieczyslaw Janowski, Institute of Sociology at the University of Rzeszów

Professor Mieczyslaw Janowski outlined his theory that many Polish people have low self-confidence, and called upon citizens to be stronger through cooperation, and thereby improve their ability to get help when needed. He believes that EU subsidies should not be seen in a negative light, but rather as a key asset for the future of the country and of Europe. He put forward his vision of politics as not being a deceitful hierarchy, but rather a collaborative platform of ideas and opinions where decisions can be made only by working together.

## Ms Julia Majewska, European Commission Directorate-General for Regional Policy

The final keynote speaker was Ms Julia Majewska, representing the European Commission's Directorate-General for Regional Policy. She too made the point that decisions regarding the future of Europe should incorporate and represent citizens, as these decisions impact upon their lives economically or environmentally. While the EU institutions need to be there to support and coordinate such decisions, their implementation often needs to be undertaken by local authorities.

Ms Julia Majewska also pointed out that the effects of the Conference on the Future of Europe will take several years before they become apparent, depending on how the EU institutions take forward the outputs of the Conference. However, the success of the Conference will largely depend on the implementation of such measures at the local level – and collaboration between all levels of government is key to succeed.

An overarching theme all speakers referred to when discussing the importance of a close relationship between EU citizens and European institutions was the need for reinforced cooperation and dialogue among decision-makers at every level of government.

The last 20 minutes of the event were given over to questions from the audience to the speakers. These included questions on how citizens can make an impact on decision-making, how they can find public consultations, and how will digitalisation transform politics.