



Comitetul European
al Regiunilor



Future of Europe: Horizon Europe – challenges and perspectives



Event type:	Date:	Organiser:	Partners:
Citizens' dialogue	5 March 2020	Cluj-Napoca City European Commission European Committee of the Regions	CaleaEuropeana
Initialising member:	Audience:	Themes:	
Emil Boc (RO/EPP)	130 (students, MEPs, European Commission, ministers, local and regional authorities, local business, civil society)	Innovation and research, brain drain, EU funds, education and youth	



Speakers

- **Emil Boc**, Mayor of Cluj-Napoca (RO/EPP);
- **Mariya Gabriel**, European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth;
- **Victor Negrescu** (S&D, RO), MEP, Member of CULT Committee;
- **Adrian Ovidiu Teban**, Mayor of Cugir (RO/EPP).

Moderator:

Dan Carbutaru, journalist, Director of CaleaEuropeana.



Key messages

The Citizens' Dialogue in Cluj-Napoca was the first of its type organised in the eve of the **Conference of the Future of Europe** (to be launched on Europe Day, 9 May 2020). The debate focused on **innovation and research, education and youth**, with the future **Horizon Europe programme** as an anchor for discussions. The dialogue also took place back-to-back with the StartUp Youth Innovation Camp in Cluj-Napoca, thus providing the perfect opportunity for a reality check on the ground. Around **130 participants** debated lively with mayor Boc and Commissioner Gabriel **on the spot** and questions were also asked **online**. **Commissioner Gabriel** said Horizon Europe is to be the biggest and most ambitious EU Research Innovation programme ever to give Europe a new push to a global positioning. It will offer stronger support to breakthrough innovation through the European Innovation Council and it will create greater impact through R&I missions and by streamlining the partnerships landscape. **Mayor Boc** pleaded to invest in local and regional innovation eco-system to effectively address the challenge of **Brain Drain** by turning it into **Brain Gain**. Through building synergies with Cohesion Policy, the Horizon Programme can hugely help by going more local and collaborating more effectively with cities and regions. Cluj-Napoca stands ready to act as pilot region for upcoming Digital Innovation Hubs and the European Innovation Council networking projects in Romania.



Press/Social media coverage

Media coverage

[COR Press Release](#)

Website

[FutureofEurope](#)
[Romania.Insider.com](#)

Social Media

[#EU_CoR](#)
[WebStream Link](#)

1. Momentum

In mid-February the European Committee of the Regions has embarked on a new 5-year mandate with the renewed ambition of bringing Europe closer to its people. The town Hall debate in Cluj-Napoca - largely attended and with a high-level participation - represented a valuable step in this direction. A live survey conducted among participants reflected that the topic was both timely (70% of respondents wish to participate in next Horizon Missions) and opportune (25% want to know more about the future to get involved). The European Commission will publish two important Communications on the European Research Area (June) and the European Education Area (September). The exchange of views reflected the interconnections and the need to create synergies between them and with other EU initiatives to maximise the impact of the EU investments on the local and regional level. On the same day in Cluj-Napoca, Commissioner Gabriel launched “the search for the most innovative European cities”: European Capital of Innovation Award 2020.

2. Participation

Participants, mainly students and university professors, but also local and regional representatives, were actively involved in the discussion. They have also participated in an online survey/mobile app on “Horizon Europe” and sent their questions live, while the debate was web-streamed.

3. Political commitment

The local, national and European levels were highly represented during the debate. Mr Emil Boc is a CoR Member of SEDEC - Commission for Social policy, Education, Employment, Research and Culture and COTER - Commission for Territorial Cohesion Policy. MEP Victor Negrescu (S&D, RO) is a member of the CULT Committee in the European Parliament. Mr Daniel Funeriu, former Minister of Education and other university professors intervening ensured an applied debate and helped raising pertinent questions and concerns at local and regional levels.

4. Accountability

Participants highlighted the need to develop information tools about the opportunities presented by the future Horizon Europe and its Missions. Citizens in the Municipality of Cluj-Napoca are committed to discuss and contribute to the development and the modernisation of the city, ensure equal chances for all and social justice.

5. Link with CoR/EU Agenda

At the CoR, research and innovation, together with education and youth represent a priority policy area in 2020. The CoR is determined to actively respond to the European Commission’s intent to work in close cooperation with regional and national authorities for making the European Education Area a reality by 2025. The Municipality of Cluj-Napoca has benefitted from the EU funding and support in transforming the city in a smart city, a real pool of talents and investments in start-ups. The debate has also reflected the need to develop more information tools to better exchange best practices among European cities.

6. Lessons learnt for future events

- The CoR own-initiative Opinion on “Brain drain in the EU: addressing the challenge at all levels” (rapporteur Emil Boc) and the main CoR proposals for the future Horizon Europe programme have been widely promoted during the event.
- The participation of European Commissioner Mariya Gabriel demonstrated her keen interest and dedication to have a direct dialogue with citizens and to cooperate with local and regional authorities on the ground, opening up concrete avenues for fruitful collaboration with the CoR as well.
- The messages collected during the citizens’ dialogues would be integrated in the CoR’s contribution to the Conference on the Future of Europe.