



TIMIS COUNTY
COUNCIL



European Committee
of the Regions

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**EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS'
COMMISSION FOR CITIZENSHIP, GOVERNANCE, INSTITUTIONAL
AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (CIVEX)**

Conference

**Implementing the proposals
of the Conference on the Future of Europe:
Strengthening European citizenship through promoting
European identity and democratic values**

19 September 2023

Timișoara Convention Center

Strada Mărășești 1-3, Timișoara 300086, Romania

The European Union is rooted in the respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights. These are the shared values which form our European identity and citizenship, uniting EU citizens in all their diversity.

The recommendations of the Conference on the Future of Europe clearly demonstrate the citizens' call to the EU institutions to communicate better on how the EU makes a difference in their everyday lives and how our shared values are protected.

Fundamental EU values should not only be enshrined in the EU Treaties, but – most importantly – shared through practices, communication and education, thus promoting the ownership of the European project among citizens, preserving the European heritage and identity, strengthening the resilience of European democracy against disinformation and other threats to democratic processes at all levels. This is of utmost importance in view of the European elections.

Local and regional authorities can help to bring Europe closer to the citizens and can be hubs for strengthening communication and engagement on European issues on the ground.

Interpreting for the conference

Participants may speak and listen in: ES/DE/EN/FR/IT/RO (tbc)

9:00 Registration and welcome coffee

9:30 Opening remarks

- **Alin-Adrian Nica** (RO/EPP), President of Timiș County Council, 1st Vice-Chair of the CIVEX Commission
- **Patrick Molinoz** (FR/PES), Vice-president of the Bourgogne-Franche-Comté Region, Chair of the CIVEX Commission
- **Dominic Samuel Fritz**, Mayor of Timișoara

9:45 Session 1: "From the Conference on the Future of Europe to European elections: strengthening trust in EU democracy"

The Conference on the Future of Europe marked an innovation in EU democratic practices. Its conclusions provide concrete recommendations stemming from dialogue between citizens, institutions and stakeholders. Regional and local politicians have made important contributions to the COFE work and have demonstrated a strong commitment to pursue their implementation. Many of the proposals should become policy deliverables for the next EU mandate 2024-2029 and therefore an integral part of the campaign for the next European elections in 2024.

Strengthening European democracy and dialogue with citizens on EU topics therefore becomes a shared responsibility of politicians at all levels, while cities and regions are well placed to implement various actions aimed at increasing trust in democratic processes and institutions as a means to strengthening democratic resilience.

Moderator: Silviu Eugen Rogobete, University of the West, Timișoara

Speakers

- **H.E. Luca Niculescu**, Secretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Romania
- **Sven Simon** (DE/EPP), Member of the European Parliament (tbc)
- **H.E. José Antonio Hernández Pérez – Solórzano**, the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Spain in Romania (tbc)
- **Nina Björby**, Chairperson of the Culture Committee in Västerbotten Region Sweden, Vice President for Democracy, Assembly of the European Regions (tbc)
- **Colin Scicluna**, Head of Cabinet of Dubravka Šuica, Vice-President for Democracy and Demography, European Commission (tbc)
- **Claudiu Marian Vatau**, citizen participant to the Conference on the Future of Europe
- **Alin-Adrian Nica** (RO/EPP), President of Timiș County Council, 1st Vice-Chair of the CIVEX Commission

Exchange of views with citizens, CoR members, delegates to the Conference on the Future of Europe

11:00 Coffee break

Press conference (RO/EN)

11:20 **Presentation of best practices from the CoR pilot project on *Promoting EU values through education and culture* #ProEuropeanValues**

Local and regional authorities are well placed for empowering their citizens and notably young people to understand the importance of European values and European democracy. The CoR pilot project on "[Promoting EU values through education and culture](#)", with over 120 examples and contributions, represents a concrete step towards creating a community of best practices at local and regional level and striving for common tools that can contribute to the EU's goal of strengthening active European citizenship through education.

Introduction by:

- **Tanya Hristova** (BG/EPP), Mayor of Gabrovo, Chair of the CoR SEDEC Commission

Spotlight on regional and local projects

- ***Shine your light – Light up your city! - Timisoara, the multicultural European Capital*** - Ovidiu Megan - Executive director, Timișoara European Capital of Culture Association
- ***Teachers4Europe (T4E) : Setting an Agora for Democratic Culture*** – Emil BOC (RO/EPP), Mayor of Cluj-Napoca Municipality, video presentation
- ***Europe during after-school*** - Christophe Rouillon (FR/PES), Mayor of Coullaines
- ***Veszprém - European Capital of Culture 2023*** - Barbara Szilvia HEGEDŰS (HU/ECR), Member of the Veszprém Local Assembly
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12:00 **Session 2: "European Values and identity: strengthening EU citizenship"**

Building societal resilience coupled with a stronger sense of EU citizenship needs to be part of a comprehensive strategy which starts at an early age and is pursued equally in both urban and rural areas, thus meaningfully supporting citizens' well-informed decision-making. It remains similarly important to ensure support for trustworthy and pluralistic local and regional media.

Our rich and diverse cultural heritage is an important component of European citizenship and of European identity, as it is also clearly stated in several COFE proposals. Meeting in Timișoara, the 2023 European Capital of Culture, is thus particularly relevant. The challenge for the European Union, in this context, is to inspire belonging and ownership based on diversity, keeping together the local, national and European dimensions.

Finally, a crucial angle to consider when it comes to strengthening EU citizenship through European values and identity, is the involvement of young people.

Moderator: Silviu Eugen Rogobete, University of the West, Timișoara

Speakers

- **Victor Negrescu**, (RO/S&D), vice - chair of the committee on Culture and Education of the European Parliament

- **Diana Mardarovici** (EPP/RO), City Councillor Bucharest, member of the Young Elected Politicians network of the CoR
- **Jürgen Czernohorszky**, head of Wiener Klimateam, Vienna's executive city councillor (tbc)
- **Dr Uwe Koch**, member of Europa Nostra Council and President of Europa Nostra Deutschland
- **Adina Trunk**, Chief of Staff to the Secretary-General, International IDEA
- **Claudia Chwalisz**, Democracy Next (tbc)
- **Thomas Hemmelgarn**, head of the EU Policy Lab: Foresight, Design & Behavioural Insights, Joint Research Centre, European Commission (tbc)

Exchange of views with citizens, CoR members, delegates to the Conference on the Future of Europe

13:20 Concluding remarks on Regional and Local contributions to reinforce citizens' trust in the EU democratic values

- **Alin-Adrian Nica** (RO/EPP), President of Timiș County Council, 1st Vice - Chair of the CIVEX Commission
- **Patrick Molinoz** (FR/PES), Vice-president of the Bourgogne-Franche-Comté Region, Chair of the CIVEX Commission

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