



## **Localism and multiculturalism**

Conference organised by the European Liberal Forum in cooperation with Republikon Institute in Carei, Romania

### **Conference report**

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of June 2019, a conference organised by the European Liberal Forum in cooperation with Republikon Institute in Carei, Romania explored the practical dimensions of liberal localism and multiculturalism. Speakers were Dragos Georgescu (Managing Director, Castle of Carei), Antal Máté (Mayor of Nyírbátor), István Sértő-Radics (Mayor of Uszka) and Andrea Virág (Researcher, Republikon Institute). The discussion was moderated by Csaba Tóth (Board Member, ELF, Director of Strategy, Republikon Institute).

The conference was opened with a speech by Csaba Tóth, who presented the participants with a few dilemmas, point of interests about liberalism, multiculturalism and local problems.

To Dragos Georgescu localism means that he is from Carei, that he is connected to the values of the past and the present. Carei – in his words – is a small town with significant heritage. This heritage means a colourful past: there were many nationalities in Carei, some just in transit, but some settled down in the town. They brought new habits, mentalities – a new culture with themselves, everything which falls under the concept of multiculturalism.

There is an ideological tint of local, municipal politics, said Andrea Virág who talked about the smog issue in Budapest where green and liberal parties would ban cars in the city centre, whereas, on the other hand, conservative parties have a more measured approach towards the issue.

In Antal Máté's opinion the biggest benefits from multiculturalism are that we can learn from each other, become more tolerant and open-minded. He thinks we don't necessarily need to experience multiculturalism in a local level, because mainstream media broadcasts multiculturalist views, so it is inevitable in our everyday lives. Multiculturalism in the long term means the rise of society.

István Sértő-Radics shared three main principles with the conference participants regarding liberal multiculturalism: 1. the local government should have absolute tolerance towards differences, 2. positive discrimination, which means helping the underprivileged, regardless of social origin, 3. zero tolerance against any antisocial behaviour.