



CHAMPIONS

Cooperative Harmonised
Action Model
to Stop Polarisation
in Our Nations

Activity Brief #5

The CHAMPIONS Roundtables

National Roundtable in Romania

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Introduction

CHAMPIONS' central action is to establish permanent offline working groups – 'CHAMPIONS-Roundtables' – bringing together FLPs (first-line-practitioners) of different disciplines, professions and institutions or to which jointly detect risks and challenges and elaborate feasible responses to counter polarisation, and to build resilience and protect vulnerable groups in their local communities. During the course of the Roundtables, FLPs will be trained to enable them to design solutions and programmes which address the drivers of polarisation and collaborate in breaking down institutional barriers.

In the medium term, their actions will impact both vulnerable individuals who will be engaged in awareness-raising events and their community – as well as local and national policy-makers. In order to facilitate these processes of offline nature an online platform will also be developed.

In the long-term, the project will be used as a pilot model and transferred to other communities. To that end, synergies with related EU-funded projects, platforms and networks will be harnessed throughout the project and after its implementation period.

Find the full roundtable report in different languages on <https://www.championsproject.eu/media/>

National Roundtable in Romania

The participants of the first CHAMPIONS-Roundtable in Romania, which took place from 30.01. to 31.01.2020 in Cluj-Napoca, comprised a wide spectrum of first line practitioners from the city of Cluj. Among the 37 participants and speakers, there were social workers, school teachers and inspectors, NGO representatives, psychologists, police and gendarmerie representatives, academics, social activists, and youth. One member of the Romanian National Advisory Board was present. In addition, nine CHAMPIONS team members were present from PATRIR.

The Peace Action, Training and Research Institute of Romania (PATRIR) is recognised as one of the leading international centers of excellence in the fields of peacebuilding, prevention, mediation and peace support. PATRIR is regularly asked by governments, UN Missions and Agencies, and national and international organisations to assist in improving capabilities, programming and policies for mediation, peacebuilding, and prevention.

The CHAMPIONS-Roundtables take place in the city of Cluj-Napoca, where incidents of group-focused hatred are noticeable especially when it comes to the different minority groups resident in the city including the Roma and Hungarian minorities as well as immigrants, ex-prisoners, and LGBTQI+ community; and on the other hand there are enough first line practitioners to catalyse change in both policies and practices.

The first day was designed to strengthen FLP familiarity and deepen their knowledge-base on issues of group-focused enmity and the current needs on-the-ground through the expert presentations on issues of social inclusion, most of whom are FLPs themselves. In between, more interactive sessions were facilitated to identify the challenges, priorities, opportunities of collaboration towards social inclusion in Cluj. The second day was dedicated to trust-building and fostering collaboration. Initial foci for collaboration have been identified; however, more roundtables are needed to further develop the task force ideas.

The aim of the Cluj roundtables is to support key institutions, civic actors, local authorities, and NGOs in Cluj towards creating practical and sustainable solutions for problems of social inclusion. An additional full-day Training, called “Masterclass” on collaboration is organised for 25 February 2020, at ClujHub. Participants from the first Roundtables were invited alongside up to five additional colleagues from their respective institutions with the goal of enhancing intra-institutional collaboration as well as inter-institutional collaboration, as well as ensuring sustainability. One-on-one meetings will also be organised with each organisation over the coming month to identify specific needs and challenges with regard to collaboration.

Participants proposed that each one of them would create an online profile in order to easily identify shared advocacies and opportunities, as well as a way of communicating with each other. Integration with the CHAMPIONS Online Platform will be examined. Finally, as requested by the FLPs, further topic-specific roundtables will be organised throughout the coming year. The participants of the roundtable have consented to have their contact details shared among the group to continue exploring ways of cooperation. Initial foci have been identified; however, more roundtables are required to fully conceptualise joint goals for 2020.



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