



Fostering Excellence in Research on
State–Church–Body Politics



Grant Agreement ID: 101184092
Horizon Europe – ERA Chairs

Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu announces the launch of a new research group in social sciences

Press release

25 June 2025

Sibiu, Romania

Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu announces the establishment of a new research group within the Horizon Europe project '**Fostering Excellence in Research on State–Church–Body Politics (FERBOPO 101184092)**'. Coordinated by ERA Chair Prof. Lavinia Stan (St. Francis Xavier University, Canada), this research group will focus on the study of the relationship between church, state and body politics. Prof. Lavinia Stan coordinated the selection and recruitment of postdoctoral researchers together with a committee of international experts, such as Prof. Barbara Törnquist-Plewa, Lund University (Sweden), Prof. Delia Popescu, Le Moyne College (USA) and Prof. Camil

Ungureanu, Pompeu Fabra University (Spain). The international panel met in Sibiu at the end of May to conduct individual interviews with the applicants invited for this selection stage.

Regarding the mission of this new research group, Prof. Lavinia Stan stated:

"The research component of this ERA Chair project will help facilitate new analyses, dissemination activities through which we will communicate our findings to the general public, but also to specialized categories in the academic area, while the project's policy segment will encourage us to develop new documents necessary for the alignment of the local, national and international university system. An important contribution of this ERA Chair initiative will be represented by our efforts to bring together specialists from various fields and disciplines who will work collaboratively as part of a new research team. I am happy to return to Sibiu, where I lived 35 years ago and where I contributed to the organization of an international congress as vice-president of the Society for Romanian Studies in 2012. I hope that all my colleagues at ULBS will support me in fulfilling the responsibilities that I have undertaken through this new ERA Chair project. For me, it is an unparalleled chance to interact closely with a dynamic group of researchers at ULBS, to expand my work in the field of equality policies, gender studies, as well as religion, and to lay the foundations of a new research team consisting of researchers who are passionate about these topics."

Prof. Delia Popescu, Le Moyne College (USA) says that:

"It was a pleasure and a great honour to be part of the selection team of researchers for the FERBOPO project at Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu. The institution fully supports the development of an intellectual community that will pave the way for cutting-edge research in Sibiu. The FERBOPO project encourages to address the crucial questions in the field of social inclusion and equal opportunities. I congratulate the FERBOPO team at ULBS and hope for a continued collaboration with the members of this new research group."

Prof. Camil Ungureanu, Pompeu Fabra University (Spain) stated:

"The selection process was transparent, merit-based, and well-aligned with the procedures and good practices in the field. The deliberations were reasoned, aiming to identify the best possible candidates. The interviews conducted in physical format proved to be particularly relevant and useful in highlighting both the weaknesses and strengths of the candidates. All criteria were carefully analysed, including the aspects regarding academic mobility and gender parity in the establishment of the new research group. Therefore, the selected candidates have a remarkable potential to increase the visibility and integration of the host institution in the European Research Area."

Prof. Ionela Vlase, the Principal Investigator of the FERBOPO project, mentions that the selection process of the researchers was a success from several points of view. First, the selection announcement attracted an impressive number of applications from young researchers, of different nationalities, with experience in international academic mobility. The candidates had doctorates obtained in different countries, including Austria, Canada, Italy, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Norway, Slovenia, Great Britain and the USA. Second, the interest in joining this research group on the church-state-body politics relationship came from numerous social sciences disciplines, such as political science, history, sociology, anthropology, and law. This enabled a selection oriented towards ensuring authentic interdisciplinarity in the formation of the new research group that addresses a theme located at the border between numerous theoretical and methodological perspectives. Thirdly, this selection process was planned from the beginning as part of the broader policy of integrating the local academic environment into the European Research Area (ERA) by attracting applications from candidates with doctorates obtained abroad who will be reintegrated in Romanian research.

Last but not least, the city's rich history and dynamic local university have attracted graduates from some of the world's best universities and some of the best young talents. "We look forward to collaborating with the selected researchers, but we also want to involve in our future projects other candidates that we were not able to select in this small research team", added Prof. Lavinia Stan, coordinator of the FERBOPO ERA Chair project at ULBS.

About FERBOPO

Led by ERA Chair Professor Lavinia Stan, FERBOPO will create a "pocket of excellence" at Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu (ULBS) that focuses on the complex dynamics between state, church, and body politics, while advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in social sciences research. With funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe (GA: 101184092), FERBOPO will enhance ULBS's academic excellence and its integration into the European Research Area.

FERBOPO Details and Updates:

Website: <https://grants.ulbsibiu.ro/ferbopo/>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/ferbopo/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ferbopo>

Email: grant.ferbopo@ulbsibiu.ro

