Cluj-Napoca (/ˈkluːʒnæ͜poʊkə/ *KLOOZH-na-POH-kə*; Romanian: [ˈkluʒ naˈpoka] ⓘ), or simply **Cluj** (Hungarian: *Kolozsvár* [ˈkoloʒvaːr] ⓘ, German: *Klausenburg*), is a city in northwestern Romania. It is the second-most populous city in the country[5] and the seat of Cluj County. Geographically, it is roughly equidistant from Bucharest (445 km; 277 mi), Budapest (461 km; 286 mi) and Belgrade (483 km; 300 mi). Located in the Someșul Mic river valley, the city is considered the unofficial capital of the historical province of Transylvania. For some decades prior to the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, it was the official capital of the Grand Principality of Transylvania.

As of 2021, 286,598 inhabitants live in the city.[5] The Cluj-Napoca metropolitan area had a population of 411,379 people,[4][6] while the population of the peri-urban area is approximately 420,000.[4][7] According to a 2007 estimate, the city hosted an average population of over 20,000 students and other non-residents each year from 2004 to 2007.[8] The city spreads out from St. Michael's Church in Unirii Square, built in the 14th century and named after the Archangel Michael, Cluj's patron saint.[9] The municipality covers an area of 179.52 square kilometres (69.31 sq mi).

Cluj experienced a decade of decline during the 1990s, its international reputation suffering from the policies of its mayor at the time, Gheorghe Funar.[10] In the early 21st century, the city is one of the most important academic, cultural, industrial and business centres in Romania. Among other institutions, it hosts the country's largest university, Babeș-Bolyai University, with its botanical garden, nationally renowned cultural institutions such as the National Theatre and Opera, as well as the largest Romanian-owned commercial bank.[11][12] Cluj-Napoca held the titles of European Youth Capital in 2015,[13] and European City of Sport in 2018.[14] In 2021, the city joined the UNESCO Creative Cities Network and was named a UNESCO City of Film.[15]

Etymology

Napoca

On the site of the city was a pre-Roman settlement named *Napoca*. After the AD 106 Roman conquest of the area, the place was known as *Municipium Aelium Hadrianum Napoca*. Possible etymologies for *Napoca* or *Napuca* include the names of some Dacian tribes such as the *Naparis* or *Napaei*, the Greek term *napos* (νάπος), meaning

"timbered valley" or the Indo-European root *snā-p-* (Pokorny 971–972), "to flow, to swim, damp".[16]

Cluj

Romanian inscription of a religious book: "Printed in Klus in the year of our Lord 1703" (translated).

The first written mention of the city's current name – as a Royal Borough – was in 1213 under the Medieval Latin name *Castrum Clus*.[17] Despite the fact that *Clus* as a county name was recorded in the 1173 document *Thomas comes Clusiensis*,[18] it is believed that the county's designation derives from the name of the *castrum*, which might have existed prior to its first mention in 1213, and not vice versa.[18] With respect to the name of this camp, there are several hypotheses about its origin. It may represent a derivation from the Latin term *clausa – clusa*, meaning "closed place", "strait", "ravine".[18] Similar meanings are attributed to the Slavic term *kluč*, meaning "a key"[18] and the German *Klause – Kluse* (meaning "mountain pass" or "weir").[19] The Latin and Slavic names have been attributed to the valley that narrows or closes between hills just to the west of Cluj-Mănăștur.[18] An alternative proposal relates the name of the city to its first magistrate, *Miklus – Miklós / Kolos*.[19]

The Hungarian form *Kolozsvár*, first recorded in 1246 as *Kulusuar*, underwent various phonetic changes over the years (*uar / vár* means "castle" in Hungarian); the variant *Koloswar* first appears in a document from 1332.[20] Its Saxon name *Clusenburg/Clusenbvrg* appeared in 1348, but from 1408 the form *Clausenburg* was used.[20] The Romanian name of the city used to be spelled alternately as *Cluj* or *Cluș*,[21] the latter being the case in Mihai Eminescu's *Poesis*.

Other historical names for the city, all related to or derived from "Cluj" in different languages, include Latin *Claudiopolis*, Italian *Clausemburgo*,[22] Turkish *Kaloşvar*[23] and Yiddish קלויזנבורג *Kloyznburg* or קלאזין *Klazin*.[21]

Current official name

Napoca, the pre-Roman and Roman name of ancient settlements in the area of the modern city, was added to the historical and modern name of Cluj during Nicolae Ceaușescu's national-communist dictatorship as part of his myth-making efforts.[24] This happened in 1974, when the communist authorities made this nationalist gesture with the goal of emphasising the city's pre-Roman roots.[25][26] The full name of "Cluj-Napoca" is rarely used outside of official contexts.[27]