

High-level Rural Policy Forum

Shaping the future of rural areas

27-29 September 2023

El Parador - Plaza del Castillo, s/n, Sigüenza (Guadalajara), Spain

Timing	Agenda
27 September 2023	
17.00 – 19.00	Guided tour of Sigüenza organised by the local authorities
19.00 – 20.00	Registration to the event
20.00 – 22.00	Gala dinner - Recommended dress code: Dark suit (Men) & Cocktail dress (Women)
28 September 2023	
08.00 – 09.00	Registration to the event
09.00 – 10.00	Opening by the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the European Commission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Mr Janusz Wojciechowski, Commissioner for Agriculture, European Commission > Ms Elisa Ferreira, Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms, European Commission > Ms Mercedes Caballero, Secretary General of EU Funds (responsible for Cohesion Policy Funds), Ministry of Finance (Spain) > Mr Luis Planas, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Spain)
10.00 – 11.00	Plenary session: Taking stock of existing policy support and looking forward Stocktaking of the contribution of the Common Agriculture Policy and Cohesion Policy to the Long-term vision for the EU's rural areas, European Commission. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Mr Mario Milouchev, Director at European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development > Ms Wallis Vandebrock-Goelen, Advisor to the Deputy-Director General at European Commission, DG Regional and Urban Policy EU High-level policy panel: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Ms Isabel Carvalhais, MEP, Rapporteur on the Long-term vision for the EU's rural areas for the AGRI Committee, European Parliament > Mr Radim Sršeň, Member of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) and Deputy Minister for Regional Development of Czechia > Ms Lidija Pavić-Rogošić, Rapporteur of the Opinion on the Long-term vision for the EU's rural areas of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) > Mr Thibaut Guignard, President of ELARD, European Rural Parliament

11.00 – 11.30

Coffee Break

11.30 – 12.30

Plenary session: Making the Rural Vision and Pact happen in Member States

Panel discussion:

- > **Mr Luis Planas Puchades**, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Spain)
- > **Ms Irena Šinko**, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Food (Slovenia)
- > **Ms Isabel Ferreira**, Secretary of State for Regional development (Portugal)
- > **Ms Céline Tellier**, Minister for the Environment, Nature, Forest, Rural Affairs and Animal Welfare of region Wallonia (Belgium)

12.30 – 12.45

Transition to break-outs discussions

12.45 – 14.00

Round 1: Parallel Thematic Break out session

Inspirational presentations & group discussions: Policy recommendations for the Council of the European Union to move forward in the following themes:

Session 1: Data and evidence for policy making

- > **European Rural [Observatory](#) and toolkit for EU Funding**
Mr Alessandro Rainoldi, European Joint Research Centre (JRC), European Commission
- > **Using evidence for policy making and rural proofing to address rural depopulation in Spain**
Ms Juana Lopez, Ministry for Ecological Transition & Demographic Challenge (Spain)
- > **Collecting and analysing data for rural policies: Science-society-policy interfaces**
Mr Tristan Berchoux CIHEAM (France) & H2020 [SHERPA](#) & HEurope [GRANULAR](#)

Session 2: Paving the way to the digital era

- > **Ensuring the deployment of ICT infrastructure in rural areas**
Mr Jan Dröge, [Broadband](#) Competence Office Support Facility
- > **Boosting digital transformation and skills in rural areas in Spain**
Mr Salvador Estevan, Ministry of Economic affairs and digital transformation (Spain)
- > **Rural digital ecosystems and innovation**
Mr Klaus Heider, Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (Germany)

Session 3: Strengthening rural areas contribution to food systems and the bioeconomy

- > **Innovative and resilient value chains in mountain areas**
Ms Teresa Pinto Correia, University of Evora (Portugal) & H2020 [MOVING](#)
- > **Arctic Smart Rural [Community](#) Cluster**
Mr Mika Riipi, County Governor of Lapland (Finland)
- > **A biorefinery as a driver for development in rural Extremadura (Spain)**
Ms Alba Maria Ramos, Natac Group (Spain) & Horizon Europe SustainNext (Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking)

14.00 – 15.00

Networking Lunch

15.00 – 16.15

Round 2: Parallel Thematic Break out session

Inspirational presentations & group discussions: Policy recommendations for Council of the European Union to move forward in the following themes:

Session 4: Boosting women's role in rural areas

- > **Promoting gender equality in rural areas in Spain**
Ms Isabel Bombal, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Spain)
- > **Boosting women-led innovation in the rural economy and communities**
Ms Sally Shortall, South East Technological University (Ireland), Newcastle University (UK) & Horizon Europe [GRASS Ceiling](#)
- > **Rural women's empowerment through green social [entrepreneurship](#)**
Ms Anastasia Constantini, Diesis Network

Session 5: Enabling community-led innovation and Smart Villages

- > **'Third [places](#)' as local hubs for community-led innovation**
Mr Marc Laget, Agence nationale de la cohésion des territoires (France)
- > **Innovating [communities](#): Empowering local communities to design their future**
Mr Gabriel O'Connell, Irish Local Development Network (Ireland)
- > **Smart Villages supporting the green transition in Germany: [Bioenergy Village](#)**
Ms Anke Wehmeyer, German LEADER Association (Germany)

Session 6: Harnessing rural talent through entrepreneurship and the social economy

- > **The contribution of [social enterprises](#) in rural Ireland**
Mr Robert Nicholson, Department of Rural and Community Development (Ireland)
- > **[Odiseu](#): Bringing back the youth to rural areas in Spain**
Mr Eduard Trepal, LEADER Network of Catalonia (Spain)
- > **Rural Youth [Parliaments](#) for the active engagement of youth**
Ms Iulia Fatu, LAG Napoca Prolissum (Romania)

16.15 – 17.00

Coffee break

17.00 – 18.00

Reporting back from discussions and conclusions

Report from the thematic session by the Rapporteurs:

- > **Ms Betty-Ann Bryce**, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
- > **Mr Serafin Pazos**, European Association for Innovation in Local Development (AEIDL)
- > **Ms Maura Farrell**, Galway University (Ireland)

Stakeholder panel:

- > **Mr Michael Schmitz**, Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)
- > **Mr Ben Van Essen**, European Rural Community Alliance (ERCA)
- > **Ms Hilka Vihinen**, Natural Resources Institute (Finland)

Key final messages, conclusions and recommendations that emerged during the Forum

- > Keynote listener: **Enrique Garcilazo**, Deputy Head of Division and Head of Regional and Rural Policy Unit, OECD

18.00 – 18.30 Closing the event

Final institutional remarks

- > **Mr Normunds Popens**, Deputy Director-General at European Commission, DG Regional and Urban Policy
- > **Mr Mario Milouchev**, Director at European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development
- > **Mr Francisco Boya**, Secretary-General for Demographic Challenge, Ministry of Ecological Transition & Demographic Challenge (Spain)
- > **Mr Fernando Miranda**, Secretary-General for Agriculture and Food, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Spain)

29 September 2023

08.00 – 15.00 Field trips organised by the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union with the support of the Regional LEADER Network of Castilla La Mancha ([RECAMDER](#)).

Local initiatives:

- > Museum and beekeeping centre of Sigüenza, supported by EAFRD (more [info](#))
- > Aromatic plants distillery of Brihuega, supported by EAFRD (more [info](#))
- > Day Care Centre of Brihuega, supported by EAFRD (more [info](#))
- > Rehabilitation of a textile factory (century XVII) into the Hotel Castilla Termal of Brihuega, supported by ERDF and EAFRD (more [info](#))