



RURALIZATION

D2.7 Intermediary conference report

RURALIZATION Grant Agreement No 817642



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¹ PU= Public, CO=Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services), CL=Classified, as referred to in Commission Decision 2001/844/EC

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Instagram of RURALIZATION: <https://www.instagram.com/ruralization/>

Twitter of RURALIZATION: https://twitter.com/Ruralization_EU

Facebook of RURALIZATION: <https://www.facebook.com/Ruralization/>

Website of Bozóky Winery: <http://www.bozoky-pinceszet.hu/>

Website of RURALIZATION: <https://ruralization.eu/>

Website of the Centre for Social Science: <https://tk.hu/en/about-the-centre>

YouTube channel of RURALIZATION:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCf0o5ql5W1TkIHGZrknLqOg>

Acronyms & Abbreviations

AGA	Annotated Model Grant Agreement
CA	Consortium Agreement
CO	Project Coordinator
DoA	Description of the Action
EB	Executive Board
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
GA	Grant Agreement and General Assembly
KoM	Kick-off Meeting
PM	Person Month
PO	EC Project Officer
RIA	Research and Innovation Action
SAB	Stakeholder Advisory Board
WP	Work Package

1 Summary and rationale of the project

The RURALIZATION project is based around the idea that a process of “ruralization” can change development patterns in rural areas overcoming population and economic decline and generating new opportunities. To foster a “ruralization” process across Europe, we need new policy-relevant knowledge, which the RURALIZATION project will generate.

Funded under the Horizon 2020 programme, RURALIZATION gathers 18 partners from 12 different countries including not only research organizations but also partners that implement innovative practices, such as members of the Access to Land network. This diversity will guarantee a wide range of perspectives and situations thus ensuring the project will formulate solutions and recommendations which respond to the diverse needs and features of rural areas in Europe.²

1.1 Purpose of the document

In order to adhere to the requirement of Deliverable 2.7 (Intermediary report), the following document gives a detailed account of the mid-term conference of the H2020 project, RURALIZATION. The mid-term conference took place in Budapest (Hungary) on 8-9 November 2021. The main responsible for the delivery of D2.7 is the consortium partner, Centre for Social Sciences (CSS), previously known as Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Társadalomtudományi Kutatóközpont (MTA TK).

The Centre for Social Sciences is a research institution where 200 Hungarian and international researchers engage in exploratory and innovative national and international research projects in the Social Sciences. The Centre’s research activities focus on sociology, political science, computational social science, network science, minority studies, and law. Researchers take an interdisciplinary approach in their scientific work. The Centre’s main goals are to extend the quality of Hungarian research to Europe and beyond, to take a prominent regional lead in social science research, and to serve as a point of scientific reference in Hungary.³

1.2 Purpose of the mid-term conference

The main purpose of the mid-term conference was to discuss the progress of the RURALIZATION project. It brought together partners of the consortium to present, share and discuss research outcomes related to the phenomenon of the ‘ruralisation process’, rural research. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the partners decided to organize a hybrid conference, so that participants and invited guests could voice their preference in relation to their participation. As agreed in the Grant Agreement, the mid-term conference is organized as one of the two international conferences of the project. It aims to gather project partners

² For more information, see: <https://ruralization.eu/>

³ To learn more about CSS’s work, see: <https://tk.hu/en/about-the-centre>

and other interested stakeholders and to allow them to exchange best practices and lessons learned.

1.3 Organizers

The following consortium partners were responsible for the organization of the mid-term conference:

- Technische Universiteit Delft (TU Delft), Netherlands
- Consulta Europa Projects and Innovations SL (CE), Spain
- Centre for Social Sciences (CSS), Hungary

Full name of the organization	Short name	Type of org	Country	Name
Technische Universiteit Delft	TU Delft	University	NL	Willem Korthals Altes
				Anna Gralka
				Helma van den Bos
				EU Projects
Consulta Europa Projects and Innovation SL	CE	SME	ES	Michelle Perello
				Tamara Ventura
Centre for Social Sciences	CSS	Research/ Non-profit	HU	Adrienne Csizmady
				Beáta Bozsó
				Veronika Kocsis
				Alexandra Sipos
				Kovács Mariann
				Bernadett Csurgó
				Gergely Horzsa
				Bálint Hilbert
				Botond Palaczki

Table 1: List of organizers of the mid-term conference

2 Agenda

The following section gives a detailed account of the agenda of the mid-term conference.

2.1 Day 1 of the Intermediary Conference

November 8, Monday

2.1.1 Welcome & Introduction

Adrienne Csizmady (CSS) and **Imre Kovách** (UNIDEB) as the local host of the conference warmly welcomed all partners and participants to the mid-term conference in Budapest. **Maura Farrell** (NUIG) in her opening presentation described the main objectives of the project and the operation of the consortium. **Willem Korthals Altes** (TU Delft) held his position as the chair of the conference, and he briefly presented the agenda of the mid-term conference. Furthermore, he highlighted what each discussion room will focus on.



Figure 1: On-site participants in the Centre for Social Science's conference room



Figure 2: Group photo of the in-person participants

2.1.2 Discussion Room 1: Rural research

Discussion Room 1 (Rural research) began with a presentation by **Maura Farrell, Aisling Murtagh and Louise Weir** (NUIG) on the topic of “Framework for Research and Innovation”. This presentation tackled key questions and proposed potential ways forward towards ruralization. **Maura Farrell** introduced the overall framework for research and innovation, along which the project seeks to investigate the possibilities to create a new rural frontier. **Louise Weir** presented the most important questions that emerged from their Research Review and posited a general direction towards an answer regarding 5 key issues: youth, newcomers, succession, access to land and gender.

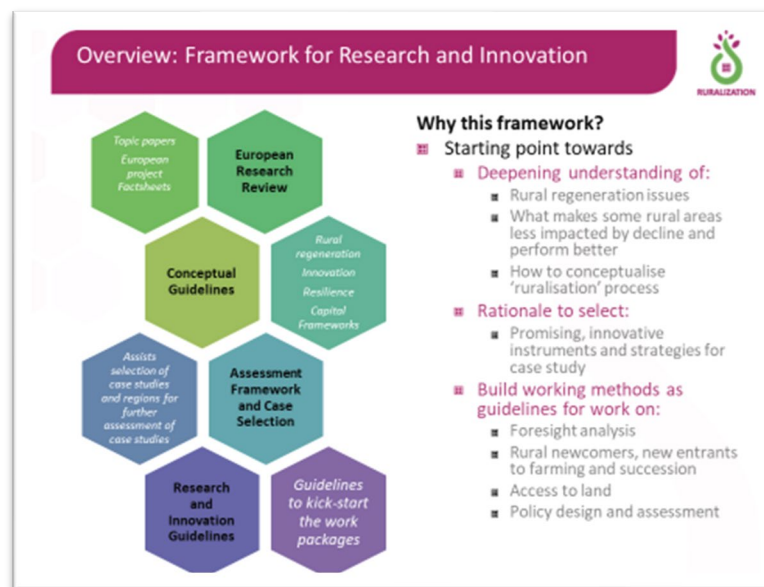


Figure 3: Presentation of Maura Farrell, Aisling Murtagh and Louise Weir (NUIG)

Following in this vein, **Aisling Murtagh** focused on the potential pathways to solve these key issues and the directions they suggest for policy, namely reinventing rural areas as innovation centres, building human capacities and the liveability of rural areas. To summarise the three intertwined parts of the presentations, the success of 'realising' ruralization depends on a variety of resources sprawled across different scales: while local context (people, place) matters, the non-local factors (policy, trends) are equally important.

The Discussion Room's following presentation was by **Tuomas Kuhmonen** (UTU) on the topic of "Foresight Analysis". This type of analysis deals with the multiverse of rural futures, which follows the 'Trends-Dreams-Assessment' process. It includes a detailed collection of possible trends of various but constantly changing relevance, followed by a dream inventory of residents from different area types, where one of the most important conclusions were the capacity of rural areas to attract new young residents. Based on these two, the assessment phase showed that looking deeper into the root causes, beyond the public sector (e.g. cultural explanations) bears more substantial results.

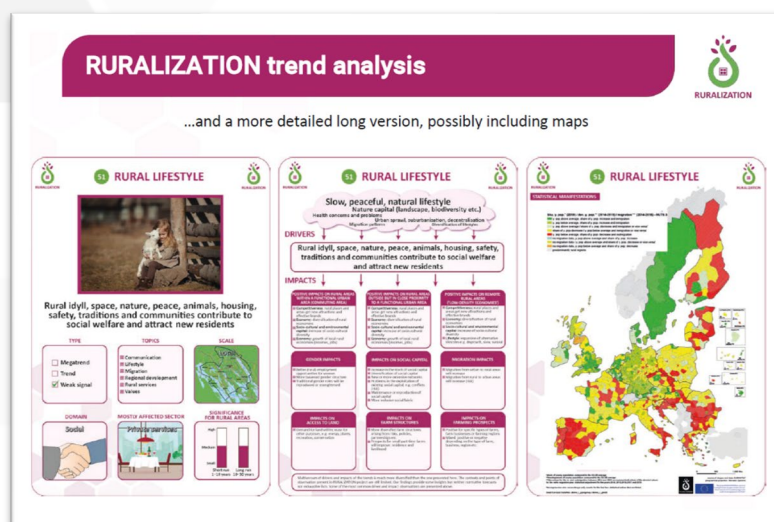



Figure 4: Presentation of Tuomas Kuhmonen (UTU)

The next topic of the Discussion Room 1 was “EU Rural Initiatives and Insights from Research Projects to Promote Ruralization”, which included short online introductions to their work by each of the following participants:

- 
Antoni Oliva (22 sistema)
 System dynamics modelling in Foresight – In Polirural project’s foresight study, a System dynamics model was developed considering the whole rural ecosystem and the interactions between different layers to aid the understanding of common problems of rural areas in 12 pilot regions around Europe.
- 
Elodie Salle (Ecorys)
 SHERPA project – The acronym stands for Sustainable Hub to Engage into Rural Policies with Actors, their goal is to gather relevant knowledge from the outcomes of research projects in the EU. Across 40 multi-actor platforms involving representatives of science, society and policy, recommendations are collected to shape the new agendas on selected research topics.
- 
Claudia De Luca (University of Bologna)
 Rural regeneration through systemic heritage-led strategies – The Ruritage project initiated six Systemic innovation areas (pilgrimage, rural food, migration, art & festival, resilience, landscape) that has heritage potential to support rural regeneration. Following ‘role models’ the project tries to convey the essentials to ‘replicators’ by facilitating knowledge-building and -transfer, which culminates in policy recommendations.
- 
Lee-Ann Sutherland (ILUSC)

The Newbie Thematic network – The focus of the Newbie project is developing a network of new entrants and relevant stakeholders. By awarding the best new entrant farmer of the year they are highlighting already proven good practices as examples to follow. They've established discussion circles and international exchanges among the network, which facilitated the dissemination of knowledge. The project, already in its closing weeks, have already come to some important conclusions, such as recommendations on supporting new entrants.

■ **Gianluca Brunori (University of Pisa)**

Desira – The project's acronym stands for Digitisation: Economic and Social Impacts in Rural Areas, but as it was emphasised, digitisation does not equal digitalisation. In 'living labs', they are assessing the needs and expectations, and the impact of past digitalisation processes in rural areas and evaluate the possibilities for the next 10 years. According to their stance, technology itself could not solve rural problems, it needs to be tailored to every case based on a deep analysis on farm-level.

■ **Mar Delgado and Sherman Farhad (University of Córdoba)**

MOVING – Mountain Valorisation through Interconnectedness and Green Growth. The project's goal is to build capacities and co-develop policy frameworks across Europe for the establishment of value chains that contribute to the resilience and sustainability of mountain areas to climate change. The inventory of mountain area value chains will be followed by the cross comparison of case studies, which in turn will lead to multi-level foresight analysis.

The closing program of Discussion Room 1 of Day 1 was a *round table discussion* and a Q&A session with the following questions:

- What specific opportunities can support new generations (e.g. newcomers, young people, migrants, new entrants into farming) in rural areas?
- What are the barriers inhibiting the realization of these opportunities that rural research has identified?
- What are the research gaps we need to address to help realize these opportunities?

Following this, the participants had a break in order to prepare to go to the site visit, after which the consortium dinner took place.

2.1.3 Site visit

At the end of the first day of the mid-term conference, a site visit took place in Mór. Bozóky Winery was one of the rural case study reports in the Wine Region of Mór.



Figure 5: Wine cellar at Bozóky Winery (Mór, Hungary)

The site visit included a visit to the wine cellar and the museum of the Winery, as well as wine tasting with three types of their excellent wines.

Bozóky Winery was established after the change of political system in 1992 related to the compulsory privatisation of the state-owned wineries. The wife (Mónika Marx) and her husband (István Bozóky) met at the State Farm in the settlement of Mór. Mór has long been associated with winemaking. The founder of the family enterprise (the husband) was the main winemaker of the wine producer State farm of Mór before the change of political system and his wife also worked there as a member of the administrative staff. Bozóky winery is one of the first private enterprises in the wine region. The winery holds about 35 hectares of vineyard. They especially grow the native grape, Ezerjő, although they also produce other types of white wines such as Leányka, Ottonel Muskotály, Tramini, Olaszrizling, Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc.

This family enterprise is now led by the founder's wife, her son and her daughter-in-law. Bozóky winery is one of the biggest and most famous wineries of Mór wine region. They are very active in local community building and tourism activities. They initiated several wine-based events, founded a private winemaker museum and they also open their cellars for tourists. Moreover, they founded the Ezerjő Wine Route Association and the Wine Lover Ladies Association of Mór too.



Figure 6: Museum at Bozóky Winery (Mór, Hungary)

More information about Bozóky Winery can be found on their website: <http://www.bozoky-pinceszet.hu/>

2.2 Day 2 of the Intermediary Conference

November 9, Tuesday

2.2.1 Introduction

Willem Korthals Altes (Professor, TU Delft) as the host, welcomed all the partners and participants at the second day of the Ruralization Conference in Budapest and briefly presented the program of the Rural Generations discussion room, mentioning the first seven speakers.



Figure 7: Hybrid mid-term conference

2.2.2 Discussion Room 2: Rural generations

Willem Korthals Altes (Professor, TU Delft) as the host, welcomed all the partners and participants at the second day of the Ruralization Conference in Budapest and briefly presented the program of the Rural Generations discussion room, mentioning the first seven speakers.

The first presenters were **Silvia Sivini** (UNICAL), **Annamaria Vitale** (UNICAL), **Boldizsár Megyesi** (UNIDEB), **Imre Kovách** (UNIDEB) and **Aisling Murtagh** (NUIG) with the presentation named “Rural Newcomers and New Entrants into Farming”. They presented their work in three main sections. First, **Silvia Sivini** and **Annamaria Vitale** spoke about the research in general, its main questions and a few results.

The research’s main question was connected to the generational renewal in farming, and newcomers into the profession. Ten case studies were conducted all over Europe in order to find out the success of the newcomers’ integration into farming life and to find out the newcomers’ main characteristics (e.g. gender, socio-cultural and economic aspects). **Silvia Sivini** pointed out the possible explanation for the low interest towards rural jobs such as the importance of cultural barrier, the lack of information and the limited training opportunities, while **Annamaria Vitale** emphasized the high start-up costs of farming. Following this, **Boldizsár Megyesi** (UNIDEB) and **Imre Kovách** (UNIDEB) gave account of their work’s main results.

First, they introduced the regional context of the investigated territories, then presented the promising practices which could serve as a useful example to attract newcomers to rural areas. Finally, **Aisling Murtagh** (NUIG) presented her work, which was made in cooperation with

Maura Farrell (NUIG) and **Louise Weir** (NUIG). **Murtagh** spoke about the characteristics and opportunities of farms' successors according to different case studies. In conclusion, **Murtagh** mentioned the potential ways forward in succession and some ideas to open more debate regarding the concerned theme.

Regarding the potential ways forward, **Murtagh** highlighted that we must look at succession differently so that it can be supported indirectly to provide more opportunities to successors. This phenomenon can be viewed as a process with eight stages (1. Awareness, 2. Wish, 3. Education, 4. Experience, 5. Search/Discussion, 6. Form, 7. Handling/Taking over, 8. Running the farm). She reasoned that it could serve as an effective tool in observing and helping succession, each of these stages has to have enough policy support. In the end, **Murtagh** closed her presentation by mentioning two main topics which deserve more thoughts concerning succession.

In the discussion section, two participants gave voice their critique about the presentation: one was concerned about the overlapping of the information given by the presentations of the Ruralization Conference, and the other one was connected to the lack of differentiation and confronting in the presented case studies. In her answer, **Silvia Sivini** said that they have just begun the comparative analysis of their case studies.

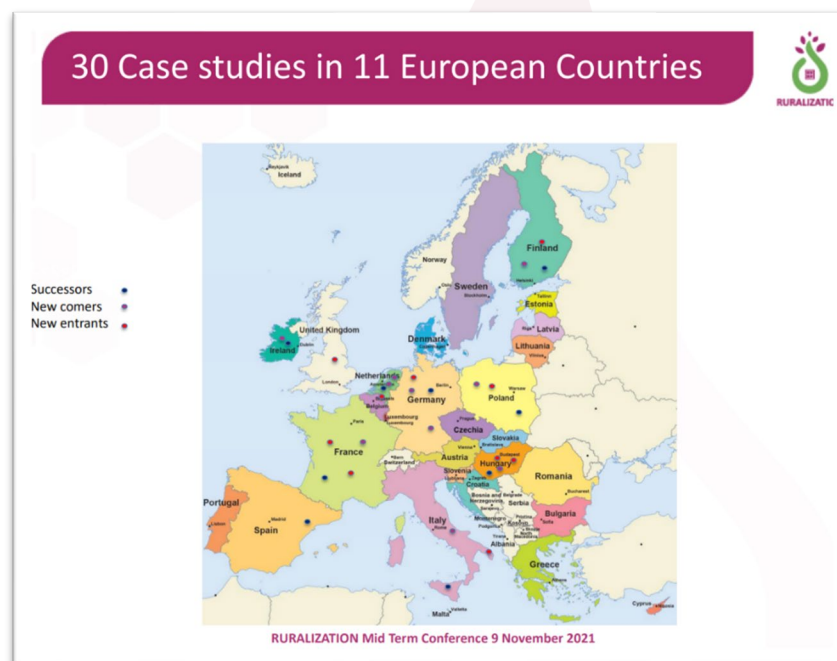


Figure 8: Presentation of Silvia Sivini and Annamaria Vitale (UNICAL)

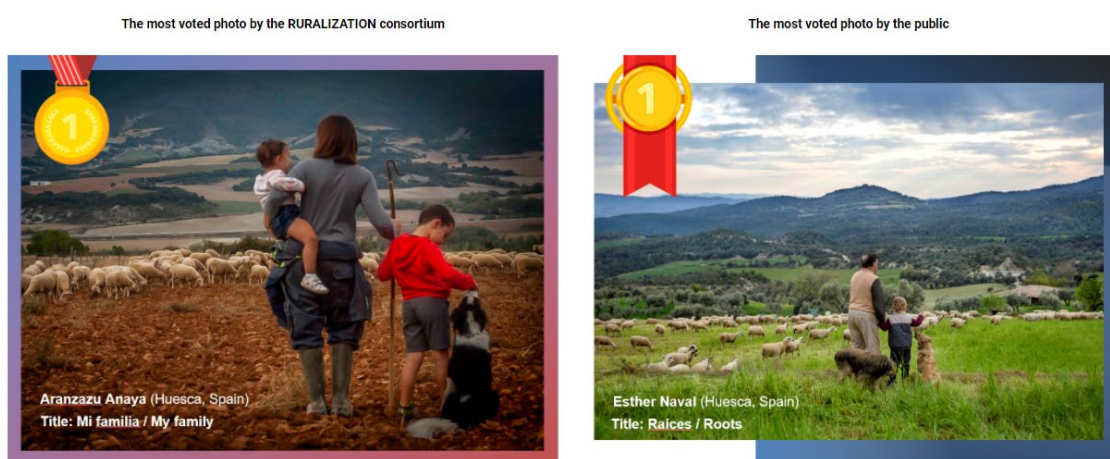
The second point of the Discussion Room's agenda was the RURALIZATION Photo Exhibition, which was introduced by **Michelle Perello** (Consulta Europa). The Photo Exhibition was organized in three stages: 1. Pre-selection of the photos that meet the minimum criteria, 2.

Final voting of the best photos by the consortium, 3. Selection of the best picture according to the public opinion.



[Figure 9: Online photo exhibition](#)

After explaining the three factors of eligibility criteria, the three photos best ranked by the consortium and the three best ranked by the public were presented.



[Figure 10: Online photo exhibition winners](#)

Some pictures from the online exhibition were presented in an offline format during the mid-term conference. The offline gallery can be viewed until March 2022.



[Figure 11: Offline version of the photo exhibition at the mid-term conference](#)

The title of the third and the last point of the agenda was “Listening to Rural Generations”. First, **Blandine Camus** (Euromontana) and **Francisco Simões** (Rural NEET Youth Network) discussed with each other, and the participants of the Discussion Room 3 main questions based on their research and experiences. The three questions were the following:

- Which barriers are faced by new entrants, successors, and rural newcomers?
- How can policy and institutional support overcome those barriers?
- How can we encourage generation renewal, young people to stay and newcomers to settle?

Two main arguments were stated: **Blandine Camus’** first comment on the topic was based on her presently going study concerning newcomers in rural areas. **Camus** shared her experience of the field-work in the topic of newcomers’ barriers: according to the questioned young people, rural areas lack dynamism, employment, and educational opportunities and also there is a problem with housing speculations that is why they don’t prefer moving to the country.

Francisco Simões added a new aspect to the discussion which was based on a recent study of his: the so-called “involuntarily newcomers” who are mainly young people. They are not in connection to the sector, have no professional training and therefore they are not facing the “usual” barriers coming to farming. **Simões** mentioned just a few barriers of the many which concern this wide group of young people: the low level of agricultural education, no specific approach in coming to farming and family resistance. Then **Camus** mentioned some other important factors in attracting young people to farming, such as education or, most importantly, employment. Both factors are the most crucial factors that have a cardinal effect in the decision to moving to the countryside.

Furthermore, regional government would have a great influence on attracting people to land by marketing and programs dealing specifically with farming. A new and a rather unexpected

factor in this topic is the COVID-19 pandemic whose influence is not yet fully researched but it is quite sure that it encourages young people to move to sparsely populated areas. In response, **Simões** agreed that the employment situation has high importance in attracting people, but he separated the act of attracting people from providing employment to them. In the first step of this process NGOs and other kind of institutions can play an important role in introducing farming and then helping these young people to decide to begin farming. The issue of training also came up as a very important part of the process because if the offered training package is attractive to young people, they can possibly invite other young people to join too. In this sense the institutional and regional level can be more important than the national level because the cooperation with the concerned newcomers is highly important. That is why the social perspective of farming would deserve more funding from the European Union as well.

After the break – joining to the conference online – **Lidia Díaz** (Spanish Association Against Depopulation) outlined main points concerning rural areas in Spain: housing, work, enthusiasm, and access to land for young newcomers to farming. **Díaz** also briefly mentioned two main projects: the Shepherdess School for Women and the cohousing project.

2.2.3 Discussion Room 3: Policy-making

Willem Korthals Altes (TU Delft), as host opened the following Discussion Room and began the first presentation of the section, followed by **William Loveluck** (Terre De Liens), **Kim Graham** (Shared Assets) and **Kate Swade** (Shared Assets). As an introduction to the first topic of the Discussion Room (“Land Innovations in the EU Context”) **Willem Korthals Altes** spoke about access to land and ruralization activities, emphasizing the importance of the generational renewal and the innovative practices of farming and rural life. Furthermore, **Altes** gave an account of his work’s results about law and policy in 28 national systems. **William Loveluck**, in his presentation named “Innovative land practices for an agricultural transition and rural regeneration: documenting and analysing, current and novel practices”, spoke about land market and policy issues which cause challenges to new entrants.

The main obstacles faced by newcomers concerned mainly to financial, technical, and networking issues. The lack of information and the negative perception also plays an important role to hinder an easy integration of new generations into farming. **Loveluck** separated the results of his work according to the already existing and the novel practices in farming and he emphasized five main potential policy changes. Regarding existing practices, the main results focused on the strong capacities of land innovations on different kind of land types (already sustainably cultivated and other types of land), the strong reliance on human and social capital, generating human capital and systemic action (e.g. providing local food and jobs, preserving environment, vibrant local communities) which can have a positive impact on rural generation.

In the topic of novel practices, **Loveluck** presented a figure illustrating the process of innovation in land issues. Innovations implemented in an adverse context and asymmetric power situation that is why it needs to build legitimacy to attract resources and it must be carefully observed because innovation is changing the way land is considered. In the end, **Loveluck** summarized five main potential policy changes: supporting social innovations experimenting and fostering agroecological transition, prioritising the needs of new entrants, supporting the reinforcement of human and social capital and multi-stakeholders’ dynamics, boosting the role of local authorities to promote novel agricultural models, changing the adverse features of the broader context to foster access to land.

The next presentation, titled “Reimagining public farmland in the UK”, was held by **Kim Graham** (Shared Assets) and **Kate Swade** (Shared Assets). According to their work, even though public farmlands have a little share of all the farmland in the UK, they have a great potential to offer opportunity for newcomers to farming. The so-called council farms in England and Wales might have a great number of opportunities for councils, farmers, and local communities. According to the vision of the researchers, these council farms could have an important role both in the UK’s climate commitment and in the strengthening of the local communities. In the end, **Graham** and **Swade** told that this vision had been created with the

help of the consultations with key stakeholders and through workshops. Furthermore, they are going to launch a policy round table on 23rd November and later there will be a whole series of media and parliamentary engagement. In the future, **Graham** and **Swade** hope that the awareness of the local authorities about this topic will be stronger and make their own cases for their land.

After the presentations the discussion began, and a short question had been asked from **Graham** and **Swade** about the achievability of their vision and the collective intelligence on their field work. Swade in her answer told that they are trying to cover all the black spots in the scope of society, for this purpose they constantly communicate with people from different spheres and organize workshops to contact farmers and potential farmers.

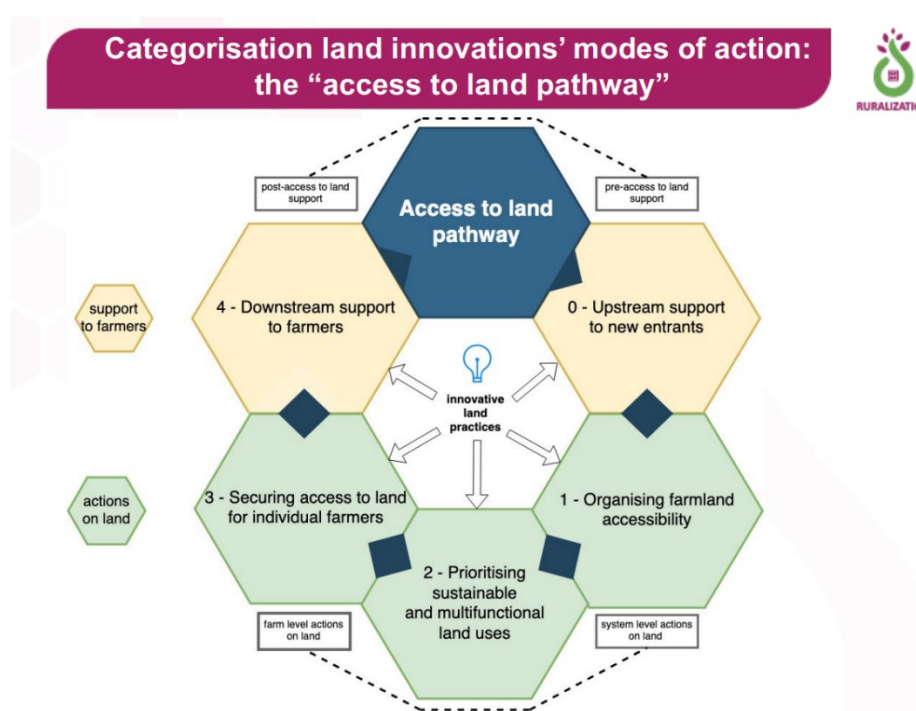


Figure 12: Presentation of William Loveluck (Terre De Liens)

The discussion proceeded with **Titus Bahner**'s (Kulturland) presentation on the topic of "Policy Design and Assessment". **Bahner** outlined the structure of tasks which will help to understand and make the process of ruralization more efficient in the future. The making and assessment process of documents and policies was explained: the handbook for local authorities on supporting A2L (Version 2.0.), the Good Practice Guide for rural changemakers, national strategic plans and policies at regional level and specific actions.

The methods of making these documents and reports are mainly based on case studies involving concerned stakeholders. The circular model effect of demographic renewal of the rural areas is a general idea to ruralization. A complex figure of the process of ruralization was

presented by Bahner which helps to understand the factors that play an important role in this process: the different factors of policies, labour market and living quality. It is also useful to think at a regional level concerning this process.

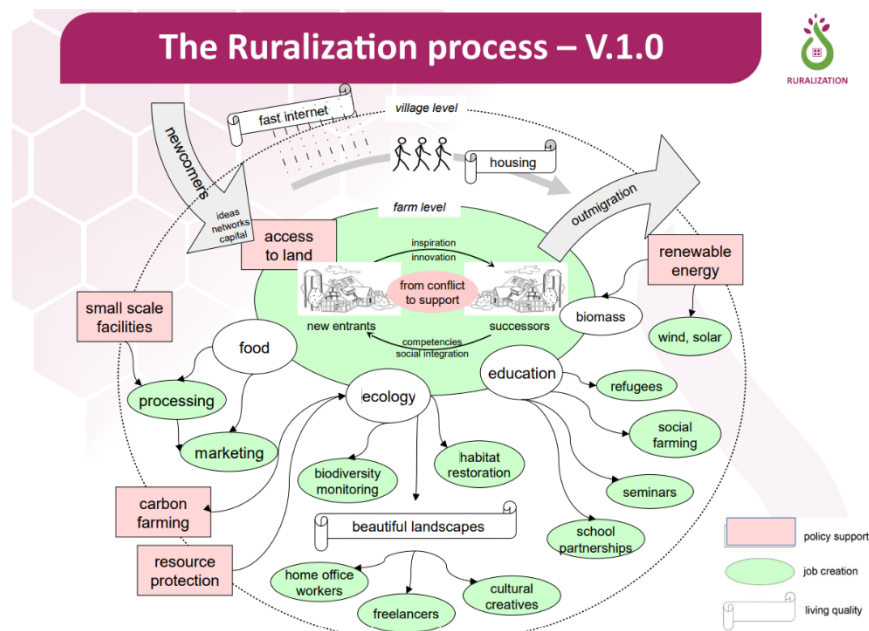


Figure 13: Presentation of Titus Bahner (Kulturland)

Alexia Rouby (Policy Officer DG AGRI) in her "A long-term vision for the EU's rural areas" titled presentation showed some cardinal points of the European Commission's vision for rural areas. The methodical background of the EC lays on three pillars: analysis, public consultation, and foresight. As consequence of the detailed statistical analysis of the EU's rural areas **Rouby** pointed out the main challenges and opportunities.

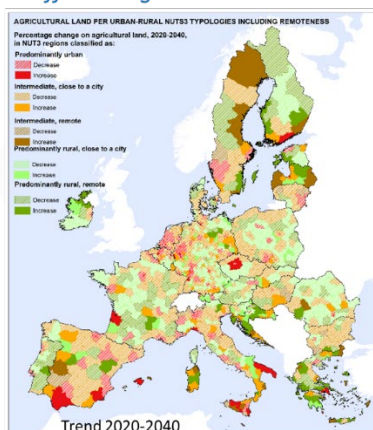
Most challenges are connected to the demography of these areas because their population is getting older and there are less women each year. Numerous economic and infrastructural factors have also an effect on these challenges, but there are some branches of agriculture that hadn't been utilized yet (e.g. Bio- and circular economy).

The results of the public consultation showed that the questioned rural population mostly do not feel left behind by society. Instead, it seems that the countryside prefer more jobs, and especially improving the green economy. The vision of the European Commission is summarized – besides many other documents – in the Rural Action Plan: four keywords highlight the EU's shared goals in rural areas for 2040: stronger, connected, prosperous and resilient. At the end of her presentation, **Rouby** mentioned three horizontal actions: rural proofing, EU Rural Observatory and a combination of EU funds. These three actions will help to review policies through rural lens, collect more data and then analysing them and distribute more effectively the EU funds to rural areas. Furthermore, the so-called Rural Pact had been presented which is a framework for interaction between all levels of governance and

stakeholders on rural development (EU, member states, regions, stakeholders). Its main goal is to achieve effectively and collectively the common vision of the EU's long-term vision for rural areas.

Land

Staff working document



Analysis

- Contrasts:
 - High-value areas: access to land is difficult => difficulty for young farmers (combined with lower access to credit)
 - In many other areas: **land abandonment** (economic, ecological and social consequences)
- % of agricultural land set to **decrease** in most regions (-1.6% EU level)
- **Intensification and specialisation** can be positive in fertile areas but also negative (biodiversity, landscape loss etc.)



Figure 14: Presentation of Alexia Rouby (Policy Officer DG AGRI)

Wallis Goelen (Adviser to DG REGIO Deputy Director General) also spoke about the EU's long-term vision for rural areas by focusing on the territorial development. According to **Goelen**, the digitalization of the rural areas is a highly important aim to attract people and businesses to the countryside, but the development of the infrastructure and available services are also necessary. The preserving of the rural areas' diversity is also a priority which calls for place-based tools, integrated development strategies and involvement of all the levels of governance to successfully facing challenges. **Goelen** emphasized that demographic decline – which is often connected to rural areas – does not necessarily mean economic decline.

The urban and rural areas are in close connection and a harmonic connectedness is a basic factor for a successful ruralization. Therefore, from the side of territorial development, urban and rural areas cannot be opposed, and ruralization cannot be the counter face of urbanization. Regarding cohesion policy, the so-called New Generation of cohesion policy, with 373 billion euros budget, supports structural transformation at local rural areas. Finally, **Goelen** introduced the EU Territorial Handbook which will help to effectively use this fund in local areas.

As the last program of the Discussion Room, **Willem Korthals Altes** (TU Delft) opened the panel discussion with the participators **Enrique Nieto** (ENRD), **Andrew Forde** (Irish Government), **Julio Bernardos** (Government of the Canary Islands) and **Elena Di Bella** (Metropolitan City of Turin, Eurocities), who had to leave shortly after. The center of the panel discussion was formed by three questions:

- How can different policy levels support the process of ruralization?

- How can we jointly elaborate effective strategies?
- How do we valorize RURALIZATION results for practitioners?

Enrique Nieto (ENRD) began the discussion with the topic of “Policy Levels” regarding the ruralization process. Nieto thought that the scale of implementation of developments in different countries is a particularly important question, thus the concerned institutes of the EU have to rethink the vertical and horizontal scale of the measures.

Reacting to that, **Andrew Forde** (Irish Government) considered the rescaling of the implementation focus one of the biggest challenges because the national level cannot surely decide what the main problems of its rural areas are. Consequently, it is hard for the state to distribute the subsidies effectively. **Alexia Rouby** (Policy Officer DG AGRI) emphasized the importance of the agricultural policy’s presence in all the EU’s different kind of other policies (economy, energy policy, climate policy, etc.).

Wallis Goelen (Adviser to DG REGIO Deputy Director General) in her comment reacted to the potential conflicts between vertical sectoral policies of the EU. **Goelen** thought that it is an obstacle but in the integrated approach of the Rural Action Plan they tried to overcome this difficulty. Through the concept of rural proofing, they will screen all the new legislative initiatives to look at the type of impact on rural areas. And with the Rural Action Plan and the rural proofing exercise the EU can observe all the governance levels in order to work everything harmoniously.

Titus Bahner (Kulturland) in his comment to the panel discussion confirmed the importance of the separation and observation of different policy intervention levels. **Bahner** emphasized that most of the cases begin with just a few actors, entrepreneurs and they must have supported by local interventions, that is why the local policy have to be the first in consideration of implementation which followed by the regional, national and supranational level (EU).

The event ended and **Willem Korthals Altes** (TU Delft) delivered the closing remarks.

3 Communication

Michelle Perello and Tamara Ventura Díaz from Consulta Europa Projects and Innovation S.L. (CE) were the responsible partner to ensure visibility of the mid-term conference as well as to disseminate information regarding the outcomes to partners and to the public.

3.1 Communication actions

The communication actions carried out by Consulta Europa within the framework of the mid-term conference of the RURALIZATION project can be summarized as follows:

3.1.1 Website

A web page dedicated to the dissemination of the conference has been created. For its creation, the corporate image manual has been followed and specific designs have been created. The conference was also streamed live on the website, the recordings are available on this dedicated page⁴.

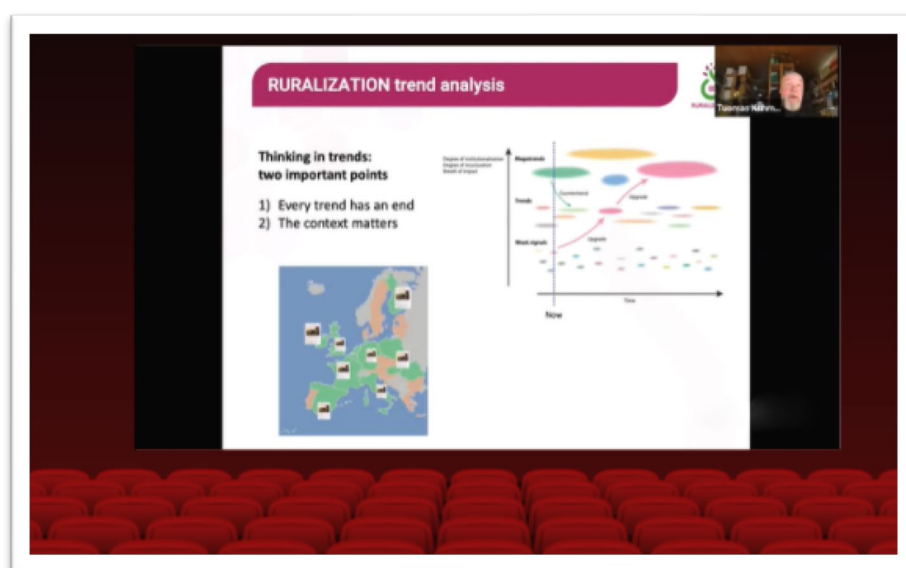



Figure 15: Conference streaming through the website

In addition, the web page has several key sections:

-  **Photo exhibition.** This section incorporates a virtual gallery created specifically to show virtually the finalist photos from the photographic contest held during the project. The winners were announced during the conference and, as part of the first prize, the winner was invited to attend the conference in person.

⁴ The recordings of both days of the conference are available here, broadcasted through the official YouTube channel of the project: <https://ruralization.eu/ruralizationconference/>

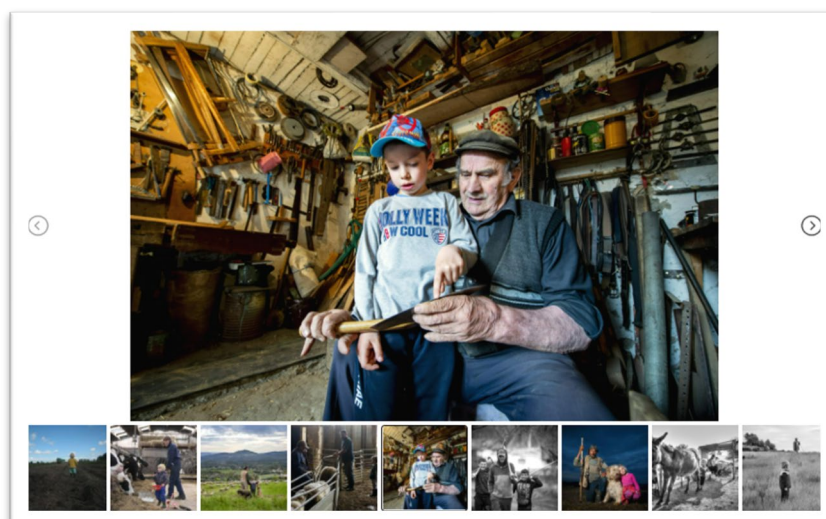


Figure 16: Virtual gallery published on the website

- **'About' information section** summarizing the structure of the conference, organized around 3 discussion rooms. A downloadable poster in PDF format has also been made available for dissemination purposes.

Figure 17: General view of the 'about' section on the website



- **Venue.** This section provides information on the conference venue (Centre for Social Sciences) and how to get there, as well as information related to Covid-19 measurements and a [Travel Guide](#) for those interested in attending in person.

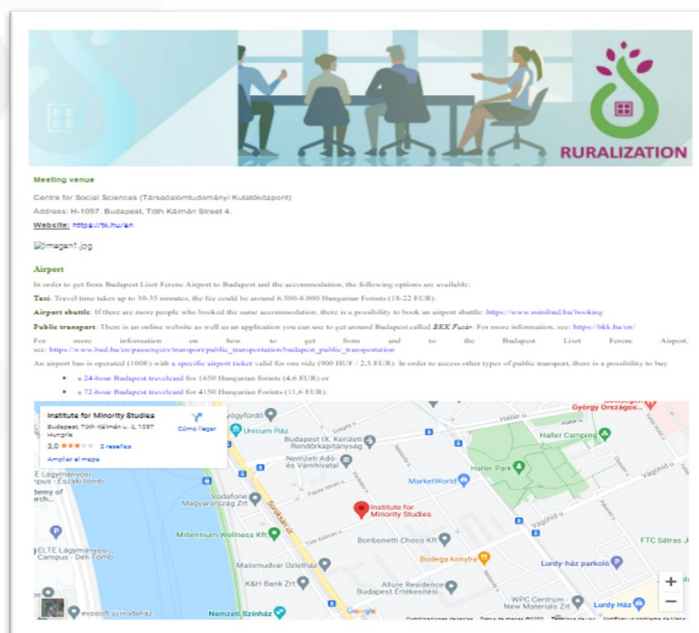


Figure 18: Website view about the venue information

- **Programme.** One of the most important sections to be displayed on the website is the conference agenda, which is continuously updated. In addition to the information about the conference, an application form to join one of the 3 discussion rooms has also been made available, which has been helpful, as several applications were received, such as the one from one of Wallis Goelen (Adviser to DG REGIO Deputy Director General).
- **Speakers** is the section where basic information of each speaker is shown according to the discussion room in which they participated.

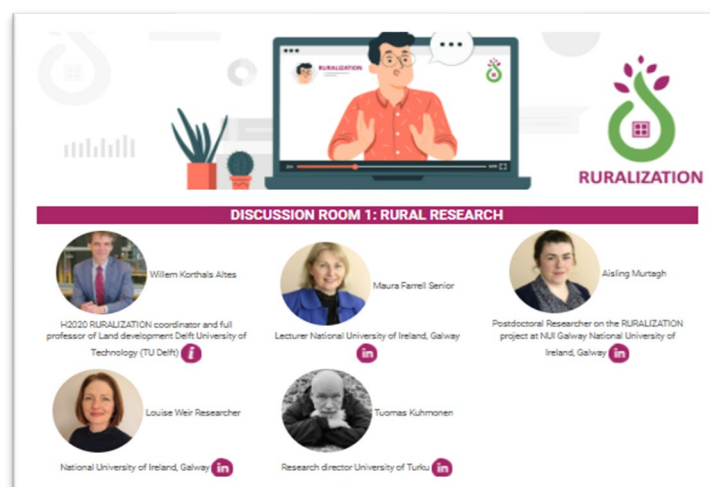


Figure 19: Website view of the speakers' section

- **Conference repository.** A gallery section has been set up to house the photos taken during the conference as well as other media resources.



Figure 20: Website view of the conference's online repository

- **Twitter conference.** The RURALIZATION Twitter Conference 2021 presentations consisted of up to five tweets (280 characters) on external twitter accounts related to topics that contribute to policy formulation and analysis in the rural context. Each presenter used the hashtag #RuralizationConference2021 and the audience simply followed the hashtag to engage with presenters.



Figure 21: Twitter conference banner

For more information, see the dedicated website to the RURALIZATION intermediary conference: <https://ruralization.eu/ruralizationconference/>

3.1.2 Design work

The conference designs have followed the visual style of the project, the corporate colors and the graphic elements derived from the logo. The following materials were designed for the purpose of disseminating the conference:


-  **Banners.** Different banners were designed to be published on the project, also to promote the event through other external websites. Specific banners were designed for the social media too, such as Facebook or Twitter.



Figure 22: Example of the conference banner


-  **Poster.** The design of a conference-specific poster has served to present the essential information of the conference, especially the theme and structure through discussion rooms. All of this is accompanied by graphics, images and drawings that make the information aesthetically appealing and easily readable. A digital version of the poster was promoted online, but there has also been a printed version available offline.



Figure 23: Conference poster design

- ❏ **Roll-up.** The roll-up is one of the best advertising media when it comes to transmitting any type of information, and that is why the main information of the conference has been summarized in a simple but attractive design, especially when it comes to taking photos. The high image quality provided by a roll up has conferred not only a more personal style, but also better visibility. The advertising impact is more than interesting, in addition to the fact that users will have a more professional image of the event.



Figure 24: RURALIZATION Conference roll-up

- ❏ **Zoom background.** To be used especially by the online participants, which helped to maintain a homogeneous image during the live broadcast.



Figure 25: Zoom background design



Social media designs. For dissemination on social networks, not only specific banners were designed for Facebook or Twitter headers, but also posts for each speaker. Thanks to these publications, the conference was shared on all their own profiles and their organization's social media networks.

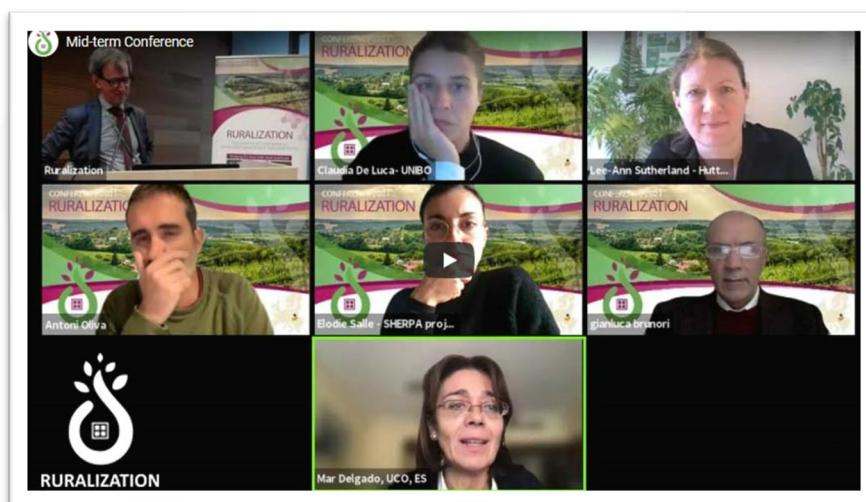


Figure 26: Zoom background special design used during the conference



Figure 27: Social media designs used to promote the speakers

3.1.3 Social media

The conference was publicized through the social media channels of the RURALIZATION project, with the aim of achieving greater online participation. The main hashtag used for the conference was [#RURALIZATIONConference2021](#), but other hashtags were used in the frame of every discussion room: #RuralResearch, #RuralGenerations and #PolicyMaking.

Before the conference: To improve the dissemination and to get more participants, two types of campaigns have been carried out before the conference depending on the content to be promoted:

- **Publications of the speakers** with strategic mentions of their related entities and organizations (highlighting policy-makers and stakeholders). As the speakers were strategically chosen following the structure of the conference in 3 discussion rooms (rural policy-making, rural generations and rural research), we have achieved repercussion in the social profiles of entities and stakeholders related to key policy-makers, rural organizations and profiles more focused on research, as well as accounts of other European projects and rural initiatives and networks.



Figure 28: Social media publications examples from other EU projects profiles

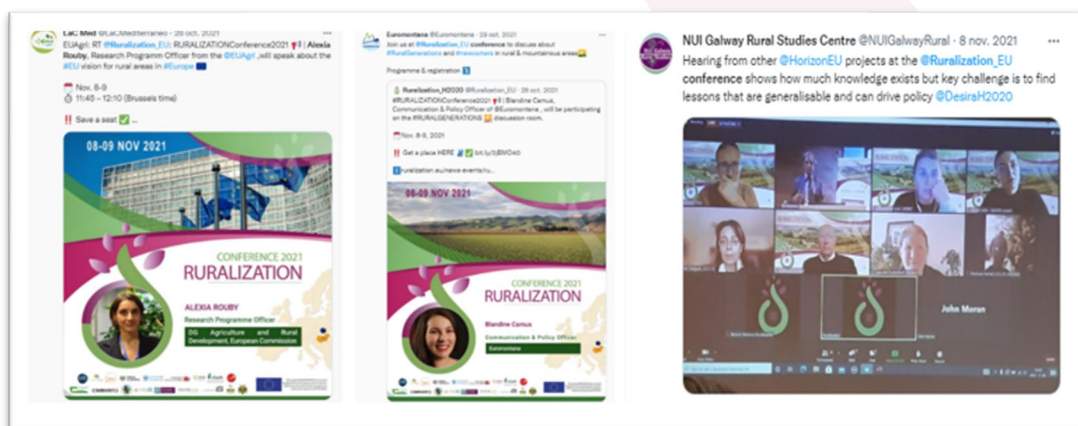


Figure 29: Social media posts published by other participants

- **Publications on the photo exhibition** with the finalist photos submitted to the popular vote, since the most voted photo by the public opinion was announced during the conference. Taking advantage of the repercussion of the first phase of the photo contest organized as part of the communication package, and due to the high number of photos submitted, it was decided to open the voting process to the public, so there would be a "second winning photo". Therefore, the finalist photos were promoted on social networks to be voted, announcing that the one with the most votes would be said live during the conference, so it was needed to assist online to know the result.

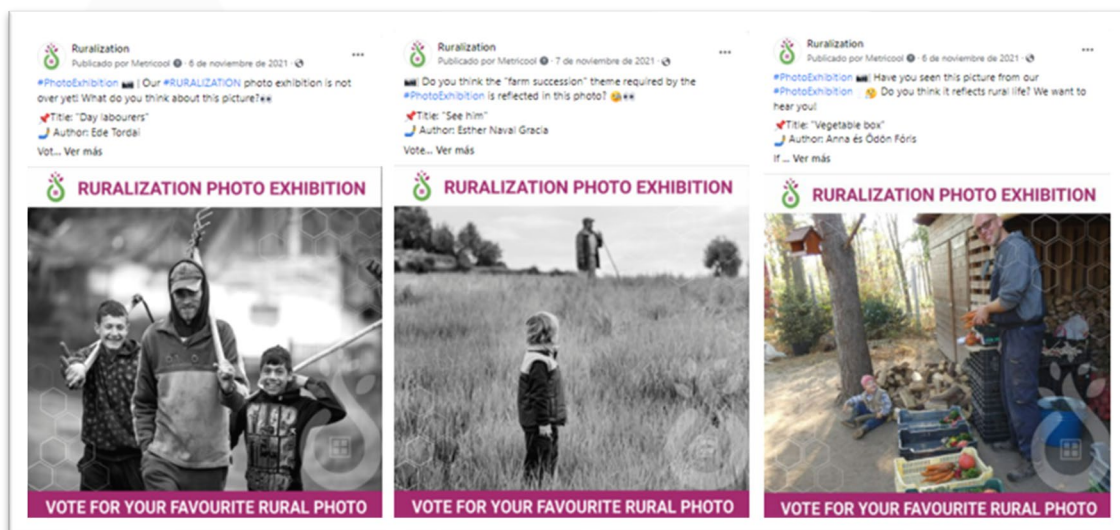



Figure 30: Social media publications to promote the photo exhibition

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During the conference: During the conference, posts were published on each intervention, highlighting each speaker and the content they addressed. Publications were also focused on catching attention to join the streaming, also broadcasted through the dedicated conference page.

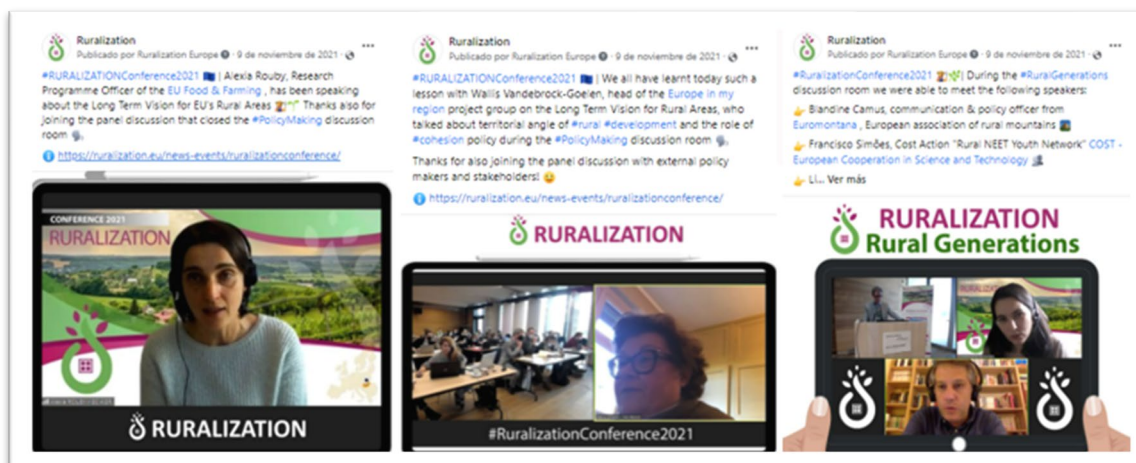


Figure 31: Social media posts about the different speakers' interventions

However, the publications that got more interactions were the post related to the photo exhibition, more specifically, the publications where the most voted photo by the RURALIZATION consortium was announced.



Figure 32: Example of social media publications about the photo exhibition during the conference

In fact, Aranzazu Anaya, the author of the most voted photo by the RURALIZATION consortium, was invited to the conference and she was able to send a breathtaking message: “We need to ask and listen to people who live in rural areas” .



Figure 33: Aranzazu Anaya's intervention during the conference

During the conference, different kind of publications were posted, considering the different platforms: Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. For instance, highlighted stories were posted on the RURALIZATION Instagram account.

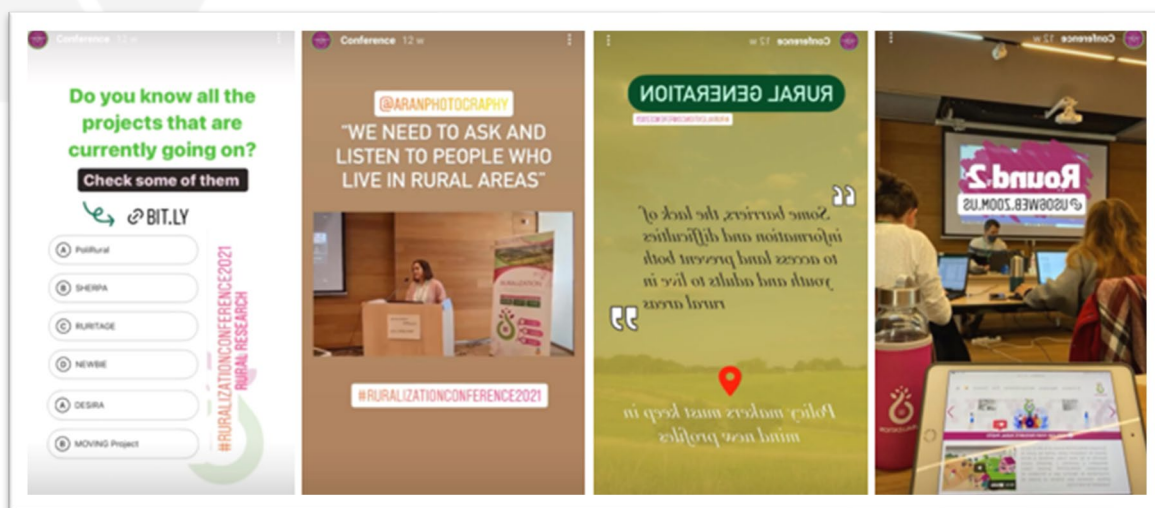


Figure 34: Examples of Instagram stories published during the conference

❏ **After the conference.** Although the conference formally ended, information has continued to be published, mainly disseminated through:

1. **The project's RuraLetter** (newsletter). Released at the beginning of February.

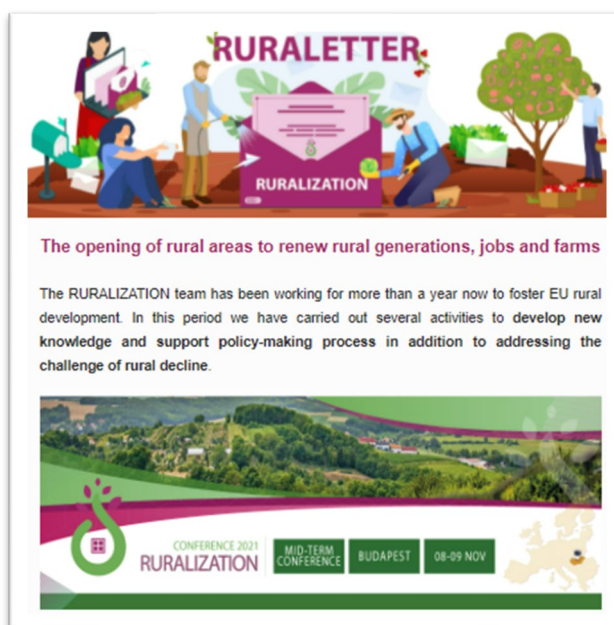


Figure 35: Promotion of the conference through the newsletter

2. **It is planned to launch a campaign with informative video pills recorded during the conference.** (To be released together with some press releases)

3. The virtual gallery is continuously promoted.



Figure 36: Promotion of the Photo Exhibition after the conference

3.1.4 Video production

During the conference and the period of stay in Budapest, interviews and resources were recorded. Specifically, work package leaders from the consortium were interviewed, as well as shots of the conference, the attendees, the venue, and the destination. This material will be used to produce:

- **A series of informative pills** to promote through the project's communication channels, in addition to nurture the website and social networks. This video series is expected to be released during 2022.
- **Editing and post-production of a storytelling video** that compiles the progress made during the project from its inception to this turning point: the project mid-term conference. This video is pending release.

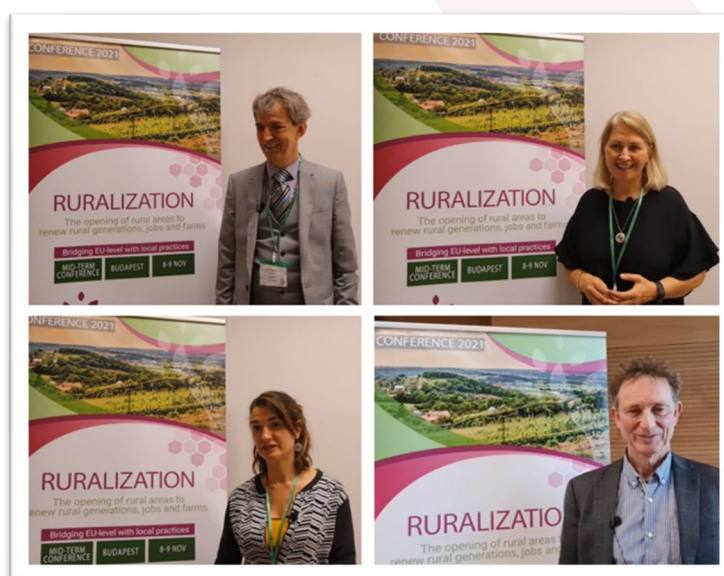


Figure 37: Interviews recorded during the conference










4 Summary of the mid-term conference

The mid-term conference was mainly organized by three partners from the consortium: Technische Universiteit Delft (TU Delft), Consulta Europa Projects and Innovation SL (CE) and the Centre for Social Sciences (CSS). As previously agreed by the consortium, an international conference, precisely the mid-term conference was organized at the 30th month of the project to bring stakeholders together, disseminate research outcomes and share good practices.

The conference was organized in a hybrid format, thus allowing participants to choose whether they would be present or in the online space. A Zoom link was provided to every participant in order to access the sessions of the conference. Also, the proceedings of the conference were streamed live through the RURALIZATION YouTube channel. The number of views for Day 1 of the conference stands at 115, while 67 viewers followed Day 2. In the meantime, live communication of the conference proceedings was available through the RURALIZATION project's Facebook and Twitter page.

The number of in-person participants was 32 (See Annex 5.2 Participants (in-person)). As for the speakers, 12 of them were asked to present on day 1 of the mid-term conference, while 24 had the possibility to deliver a presentation on their own area of expertise and research during the second day.

The mid-conference in numbers:

-  1 city
-  2 days
-  3 main organizers from the consortium
-  15 #RURALIZATIONConference2021 hashtags mentioned on Twitter
-  21 finalists' pictures in the online photo exhibition
-  32 participants in-person
-  115 zoom participants
-  182 YouTube views
-  More than 32.300 social media outreach

The following main topics were discussed during the conference: rural research (including the framework for research and innovation, a foresight analysis, EU rural initiatives and insights from research projects to promote ruralization, research gaps regarding the opportunities of new generations in rural areas and the barriers related to such opportunities); rural

generations (including rural newcomers and new entrants into farming); and policy-making, design and assessment with a special focus on EU policies.

The mid-term conference also offered a site-visit to the participants in the wine region of Mór (Hungary) in order to gain a better understanding of rural areas and related opportunities in one of the case study region of Hungary.

The conference involved many participants from different sectors; thus, participants had the opportunity to learn about each other's professional perspective. As it can be seen from the speakers and the participants, academia, NGOs, and EU-level was present. This has helped to discover possible areas of cooperation, to share best practices and research outcomes and to evaluate policies in relation to ruralization. Presentations and discussions of the conference confirmed that ruralisation depends on several factors, such as variety of resources at a variety of scales, the importance of the local context, policies, and global trends such as globalisation, urbanisation, and digitisation. Preliminary results of the project also demonstrate that innovative practices can be more effective with policy support.

The consortium of RURALIZATION aims to further develop a novel perspective for rural areas to trigger a process of ruralisation as counterforce to urbanisation which is significantly connected to EC's long-term visions for rural areas and related priorities such as stronger, connected, prosperous and resilient. The mid-term conference was another stepping stone to present the initial outcomes of the project in order to provide novel options for policy makers and practical tools for rural actors.

5 Annexes

5.1 Agenda of the mid-term conference

Monday, 8th November

Mid-term Conference

Mid-term Conference - Day 1		
11:30 – 12:30	Lunch	
12:30 – 12:45	Welcome & Introduction to RURALIZATION	Willem Korthals Altes (TU Delft)
	DISCUSSION ROOM 1: RURAL RESEARCHING	
12:45 – 13:15	Framework for research and innovation <i>Key questions and potential ways forward towards ruralization</i>	Maura Farrell, Aisling Murtagh and Louise Weir (NUIG) <i>(20min presentation + 10 min discussions)</i>
13:15 – 13:45	Foresight analysis	Tuomas Kuhmonen (UTU) <i>(20min presentation + 10 min discussions)</i>
13:45 – 14:10	EU rural initiatives and insights from research projects to promote ruralization PoliRural SHERPA RURITAGE NEWBIE DESIRA MOVING Project	Flash project presentations (5 min each): Antoni Oliva (22 sistema) Elodie Salle (Ecorys) Claudia De Luca (University of Bologna) Lee-Ann Sutherland (ILUSC) Gianluca Brunori (University of Pisa) Mar Delgado and Sherman Farhad (University of Córdoba)
14:10 – 14:30	Round table discussion: - What specific opportunities can support new generations (e.g. newcomers, young people, migrants, new entrants into farming) in rural areas? - What are the barriers rural research has identified inhibiting the realisation of these opportunities? - What are the research gaps we	Round table discussion + Q&A time (25 min)

	need to address to help realise these opportunities?	
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14:30 – 15:00	Break	
15:00 – 18:00	Site visit to a rural case study	Bozóky Winery - Wine Region of Mór
18:00	Consortium dinner	Öreg Prés Butikhotel - Inn to the Old Wine Press

Tuesday, 9th November

Mid-term Conference – Day 2

08.30 – 09:00	Start Meeting (Coffee)	
09:00 – 09:15	Welcome	Willem Korthals Altes (TU Delft)
	DISCUSSION ROOM 2: RURAL GENERATIONS	
09:15 – 10:00	Rural newcomers and new entrants into farming	Silvia Sivini and Annamaria Vitale (UNICAL), Imre Kovách (UNIDEB), Megyesi Boldizsár (UNIDEB), Maura Farrell, Aisling Murtagh and Louise Weir (NUIG) (30min presentation + 15 min discussions)
10:00 – 10:10	RURALIZATION Photo Exhibition	Michelle Perello (Consulta Europa)
10:10 – 10:30	Listening to rural generations - Which barriers are faced by new entrants, successors, and rural newcomers? - How can policy and institutional support overcome those barriers? - How can we encourage generation renewal, young people to stay, newcomers to settle?	Blandine Camus (Euromontana) Lidia Díaz (Spanish Association Against Depopulation) Francisco Simões (Rural NEET Youth Network)
10:30 – 10:45	Coffee break	

	DISCUSSION ROOM 3: POLICY-MAKING	
10:45 – 11:30	Land innovations in the EU context: working on the field to overturn dominant land trends and paradigms	Willem Korthals Altes (TU Delft),

		William Loveluck (Terre De Liens), Kim Graham and Kate Swade (Shared Assets) <i>(30min presentation + 15 min discussions)</i>
11:30 – 11:45	Policy design and assessment – Outline of Work Package and methodology – First draft of “the RURALIZATION process”	Titus Bahner, Hans-Albrecht Wiehler and Ciane Goulart (KulturLand) <i>(10min pres. + 5 min discussions)</i>
11:45 – 12:10	A long-term vision for the EU’s rural areas	Alexia Rouby (Policy Officer - DG AGRI)
12:10 - 12:30	Territorial angle of rural development and role of Cohesion Policy	Wallis Goelen (Adviser to DG REGIO Deputy Director General)
12:30 – 13:00	Panel Discussion: – How can different policy levels support the process of RURALIZATION? – How can we jointly elaborate effective strategies? – How do we valorize RURALIZATION results for practitioners?	Willem Korthals Altes (TU Delft) + TDL + KulturLand + invited policy makers and stakeholders (N.N.): - Enrique Nieto (ENRD) - Andrew Forde (Irish Government) - Julio Bernardos (Government of the Canary Islands) - Elena Di Bella (Metropolitan City of Turin, Eurocities)
13:00 – 14:00	<i>Closing the mid-term conference / Lunch</i>	

General Assembly – NG & SAB

Tuesday, 9th November

General Assembly – Day 1

13.00 – 14:00	Lunch	
14:00 – 15:30	Group discussions	All (max 2 hours – choose your group)

Meeting 1 – New Generations

14:00 – 15:30	Group discussion – New Generations	Robert Skrzypczyński (UWr), Maarten Koreman (TU Delft)
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Meeting 2 – Stakeholder Advisory Board

14:30 – 15:30	Group Discussion – S.A.B.	Neus Monllor Rico
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Meeting 3 – General Assembly

14:30 – 15:00	WP1 – Management	Anna Gralka (TU Delft)
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15:00 – 15:30	WP2 – Dissemination and Exploitation	Michelle Perello (CE)
15:30 – 16:15 16:15 – 17:00	Conclusions from the group discussions – New Generations – S.A.B.	- Alice, Robert, Maarten - Neus Monllor Rico
17:00	Closing the meeting	

DAY 3 General Assembly - Discussions

Wednesday, 10th November

General Assembly		
08.30 – 09:00	Start Meeting (Coffee)	
09:00 – 09:15	Welcome	Willem Korthals Altes (TU Delft)
09:15 – 09:45	RURALIZATION Concepts: Reflection on Work Package Usage	Maura Farrell, Aisling Murtagh and Louise Weir (NUIG)
09:45 – 10:15	The marriage between WP4 and WP7	Tuomas Kuhmonen (UTU)
10:15 – 10:45	WP5 towards WP7: social and policies innovation	Silvia Sivini (UNICAL)
10:45 – 11:00	Coffee break	
11:00 – 11:30	Articulating land policy, markets, and innovations: pooling WP6 results with a look towards WP7	Alice Martin-Prével (TDL)
11:30 – 12:00	Can a stage theory of societal evolution help to understand RUR case studies and to derive policy conclusions?	Titus Bahner (Kulturland)
12:00	Closing the General Assembly	

5.2 Participants (in-person)

NAME	INSTITUTION
Adrienne Csizmady	Centre for Social Sciences (CSS)
Aisling Murtagh	National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG)
Alice Martin-Prevel	Terre de Liens
Anaya Aranzazu	Consulta Europa

Anna Gralka	Delft University of Technology (TU Delft)
Annamaria Vitale	University of Calabria (UNICAL)
Anne Kinsella	Teagasc
Bernadett Csurgó	Centre for Social Sciences (CSS)
Boldizsár Megyesi	University of Debrecen (UNIDEB)
Camille Robert-Boeuf	CNRS
Florian Ahlmayer	ILS
Gabriella Nemes-Zámbó	University of Debrecen (UNIDEB)
Hans-Albrecht Wiehler	Kulturland
Helma van den Bos	Delft University of Technology (TU Delft)
Imre Kovách	University of Debrecen
Ingrid Opitz	Canarias7
Javier Ascaso	Consulta Europa
Louise Weir	National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG)
Maarten Koreman	Delft University of Technology (TU Delft)
Maura Farrell	National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG)
Mauro Conti	University of Calabria (UNICAL)
Nicole Chambron	CERF
Nicole Mathieu	CNRS
Noémi Loncsák	University of Debrecen (UNIDEB)
Pertti Ruuska	University of Turku
Petra Tas	De Landgenoten
Silvia Silvini	University of Calabria (UNICAL)
Tamara Ventura Díaz	Consulta Europa
Titus Bahner	Kultruland
Vivienne de Lafond	CNRS
Willem Korthals Altes	Delft University of Technology (TU Delft)
William Loveluck	Terre de Lines

5.3 Speakers

DISCUSSION ROOM 1: RURAL RESEARCH



Willem Korthals Altes
H2020 RURALIZATION coordinator and full
professor of Land development
Delft University of Technology (TU Delft)



Maura Farrell
Senior Lecturer
National University of Ireland, Galway



Aisling Murtagh
Postdoctoral Researcher on the RURALIZATION
project at NUI Galway
National University of Ireland, Galway



Louise Weir
Researcher
National University of Ireland, Galway



Tuomas Kuhmonen
Research director
University of Turku



EU rural initiatives and research projects



Mar Delgado
Coordinator of the MOVING Project
University of Córdoba



Sherman Farhad
Scientific Coordinator of the MOVING Project
University of Córdoba



Antoni Oliva
Researcher
PoliRural project



Elodie Salle
SHERPA project manager
Ecorys



Claudia De Luca
Post-Doc Research Fellow
University of Bologna – RURITAGE Coordination
Team



Lee-Ann Sutherland
Director of International Land Use Study Centre
NEWBIE



Gianluca Brunori
Professor and DESIRA project coordinator
University of Pisa



DISCUSSION ROOM 2: RURAL GENERATIONS



Silvia Sivini
Researcher
University of Calabria



Annamaria Vitale
Researcher
University of Calabria



Imre Kovách
Professor
Hungarian Academy of Sciences



Megyesi Boldizsár
Researcher
Hungarian Academy of Sciences



Aisling Murtagh
Postdoctoral Researcher on the RURALIZATION
project at NUI Galway
National University of Ireland, Galway



Maura Farrell
Senior Lecturer
National University of Ireland, Galway



Louise Weir
Researcher
National University of Ireland, Galway



Michelle Perello
CEO and researcher
Consulta Europa Projects & Innovation



Listening to rural generations



Blandine Camus
Communication & Policy Officer
Euromontana



Lidia Díaz
President
Spanish Association Against Depopulation



Francisco Simões
Chair and Assistant Researcher
Cost Action "Rural NEET Youth Network"



DISCUSSION ROOM 3: POLICY-MAKING



Willem Korthals Altes
H2020 RURALIZATION coordinator and full
professor of Land development
Delft University of Technology (TU Delft)



Kate Swade
Co-Executive Director
Shared Assets UK



Ciane Goulart
Project collaborator
Kulturland eG



William Loveluck
Research officer
Terre de Liens' national federation



Titus Bahner
Founder, Managing Director
Kulturland eG



Kim Graham
Research Coordinator
Shared Assets UK



Hans-Albrecht Wiehler
Scientific Employee
Kulturland eG



A long-term vision for the EU's rural areas and panel discussion



Alexia Rouby
Research Programme Officer
DG Agriculture and Rural Development, European
Commission



Wallis VANDEBROCK-GOELEN
Head of the REGIO Project Group on the Long
Term Vision for Rural Areas
Directorate-General Regional and Urban Policy
(DG REGIO)



Other policy-makers and stakeholders



Andrew Forde
Head of Rural Strategy & Social Enterprise
Department of Rural & Community Development,
Irish Government



Julio Bernardos
Agricultural Engineer
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