

High-level Rural Policy Forum

Europe's Rural Future - Responding to rural priorities through integrated national and regional strategies and **LEADER**

RURAL PACT

3 - 4 November 2026

Naas, County Kildare, Ireland

Draft agenda



Tentative Timing (GMT)	Draft agenda items
02 November 2026	
18:30	Shuttle buses from Dublin Airport to the town of Naas
03 November 2026 – Integrated rural strategies at national and regional levels	
09:30 – 10:30	Registration and welcome coffee
10:30 – 11:15	Welcome and high-level opening interventions. Integrated rural development: From Cork 1.0 to today > Representative of the Irish Presidency of the Council of the EU > European Commission
11:15 – 12:30	Keynote speakers on integrated rural policies as engines for the future of rural areas > Enhancing policies for competitive, resilient and sustainable rural areas through integrated national rural strategies OECD > Designing a comprehensive policy response to address rural needs and opportunities in the future NRPPs Mr Mario Milouchev, Director, DG AGRI, European Commission > Experiences from Member States designing and implementing integrated, national and regional rural strategies • Our Rural Future: Advancing integrated support to rural communities (Ireland) Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht • National Strategy for territorial equity and the demographic challenge (Spain) Ms Angeles Marín, Director General, Ministry of ecological transition and the demographic challenge, Spain
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:30	Panel Debate: How can whole-of-government policy approaches help foster rural attractiveness under future National and Regional Partnership Plans (NRPPs)? > Council of the European Union Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht > European Commission Mr Hugo Almeida, Head of Unit, DG AGRI, European Commission > Committee of the Regions Mr Emil Boc, Member of the Committee of the Regions (CoR) and Rapporteur of the Opinion on NRPP Fund Regulation (tbc)
15:30 – 16:00	Coffee break



16:00 – 17:45

Group discussions: Ensuring effective design of integrated rural strategies at national and regional levels

- > **Group 1: A forward looking rural vision implemented through a whole-of-government strategy and rural proofing**
 - **France Ruralité (France) (tbc)**
 - **Rural Agenda of Catalonia (Spain)**
Mr Ramón Armengol, Director General, Department for Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Food of Catalonia (Spain)
 - **Rural proofing in Ireland**
- > **Group 2: Mechanisms to coordinate action and funding across governance levels to deliver innovative, place-based solutions**
 - **Finland's Rural Policy Council (Finland)**
Ms Antonia Husberg, Ministry of Agriculture and forestry, Finland
 - **Participatory, integrated governance to boost local action in rural Tuscany (Italy)**
Ms Alessandra De Renzis, Expert to the President's Cabinet, Government of Tuscany, Italy
 - **Simplify access to funding at local level in the region of Tyrol (Austria)**
Ms Juliane Weickert, Regional Government Tyrol, Austria
- > **Group 3: Structures to engage rural communities and civil society with decision makers and build capacities**
 - **The Dutch Rural Pact (The Netherlands)**
Mr Ben van Essen, ERCA
 - **A National Rural Parliament (Slovenia)**
Mr Primož Kroflič, Slovenian Rural Development Network
Ms Prof Irma Slavic, University of Ljubljana
 - **Example from Ireland**

17:45 – 18:00

Transition to plenary

18:00 – 18:30

Report back from the Group Discussions

18:30 – 20:30

Networking dinner

21:00

Shuttle buses from the venue to the town of Naas



04 November 2026 – LEADER/CLLD

08:00	Shuttle buses from the town of Naas to the venue
08:30 – 09:00	Registration and welcome coffee
09:00 – 09:30	Opening > High-level opening: 35 Years of LEADER in Ireland: From local action to lasting impact Representative of the Irish Presidency of the Council of the EU > Introduction of the agenda of the day Rural Pact Support Office
09:30 – 10:45	LEADER: A European success story delivering value for rural communities and Europe > Stronger rural communities: The added value of LEADER/CLLD Ms Elena Pisani, University of Padova, Italy > Stakeholder Panel: Local stakeholder stories outlining their experience with LEADER and the impact in their territories • Mr Alistair Adam Hernández, University of Vechta, Germany • Ms Anita Selicka, Latvian Rural Forum, Latvia • Irish example
10:45 – 12:00	LEADER/CLLD in the future > LEADER/CLLD in the post-2027 EU policy Ms Iwona Lisztwan, DG AGRI, European Commission > Stakeholder Panel: Exchanging views about the future of LEADER/CLLD • Mr Klaus Heider, Deputy State Secretary & Head of Directorate-General Department of Regional Identity, Rural Areas, Social Policy in Agriculture, Innovation. Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Regional Identity (Germany) • Ms Beata Rodak, Head of LEADER unit, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (Poland) • Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (Spain) (tbc) • Ms Marion Eckardt, Executive Director & Policy Lead, European LEADER Association for Rural Development (ELARD)
12:00 – 13:30	Lunch (combined with the LEADER showcase)
13:30 – 14:15	Panel Debate - Infusing the National-Regional Partnership Plan with strategic rural policy approaches: Conclusions from the Forum and next steps
14:15 – 14:30	Conference close
15:00	Shuttle buses to Dublin Airport



Ní neart go cur le chéile

Strength with unity