



European Economic and Social Committee

EUROPEAN UNION



Committee of the Regions

Joint EESC-CoR Conference "Cork+20: leaving rural areas behind is no longer an option!"

9 November 2016, meeting room JDE 51 (101 rue Belliard, 1040 Brussels)

The [first Cork Declaration](#), adopted on 9 November 1996, forthrightly requested "a fairer balance" of public spending and investments between rural and urban areas. In the new [Cork 2.0 Declaration](#) adopted on 6 September 2016, there is only one concrete proposal with the potential to have a meaningful impact: the so called "rural proofing" whose aim would be to "systematically review other macro and sectorial policies through a rural lens".

The overall trend seems to be now towards a less ambitious and resolute consideration for the well-being and interests of the rural areas. The concept of "rural preference" in the allocation of public funds, which was supposed to become the cornerstone of the nascent rural development policy twenty years ago, is now nowhere to be found. The only positive development seems to be the preference given to a more bottom-up approach – in contrast with the top-down orientation of the original declaration – which has demonstrated its validity in community-based initiatives such as LEADER and CLLD.

This joint conference has a double objective:

- 1) To discuss with the Commission, the Parliament and the Council – under the rotating presidency of Slovakia – the current state of rural territories, twenty years after the first Cork declaration.
- 2) To urge them to come up with concrete measures on how to implement the "rural proofing" of all EU policies, which will imply the review of the EU structural and regional strategies.



European Economic and Social Committee

EUROPEAN UNION



Committee of the Regions

Draft Programme

The three panels will be moderated by Tom Jones, member of the EESC's NAT Bureau

- 9.30 a.m. **From Cork 1.0 to Cork 2.0: the present state of rural territories in the EU**
Tony Buchanan, Vice-Chair of the NAT Commission of the CoR
Brendan Burns, Chair of the NAT Section of the EESC
René Collin, Walloon Minister of Rurality
ESPON (European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion)
- 11.00 a.m. **"Rural preference" in Cork 1.0: 20 years' worth of regional and structural policies**
Presentation of a CoR study on the evolution of the budget dedicated to rural areas
Mercedes Bresso, Chair of the RUMRA intergroup of the European Parliament
Gérard Peltre, Chairman of RED (Rurality-Environment-Development)
Vanessa Halhead, Coordinator of the European Rural Parliament
- 12.30 p.m. **Buffet-lunch (in Atrium 5)**
- 2.00 p.m. **The "review of other macro and sectorial policies through a rural lens" in Cork 2.0**
Peter Javorčík, Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic to the EU
Czesław Siekierski, Chair of the AGRI Committee of the EP
Jerzy Plewa, Director-General AGRI
Marc Lemaître, Director-General REGIO
- 3.30 p.m. **A message from civil society and local authorities: No Territory Left Behind**
Georges Dassis, President of the European Economic and Social Committee
Karl-Heinz Lambertz, 1st Vice-President of the European Committee of the Regions
-