

# SOCIAL INNOVATORS IN RURAL AREAS

SIMRA FINAL CONFERENCE

“FROM THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL INITIATIVES  
TO THE INTEGRATION INTO PUBLIC POLICIES”

Final  
Conference



Brussels

19 February 2020





Venue: University Foundation, rue d'Egmont 11, 1000 Brussels, Belgium

Target audience: European Commission, Members of the European Parliament, regional authorities, NGOs, European networks, researchers, and all those working on social innovation and/or rural areas

Since starting in 2016, the Horizon 2020 project “**Social Innovation in Marginalised Rural Areas**” (SIMRA) has been at the forefront in promoting the contribution of social innovation to social, economic and environmental development in disadvantaged rural areas. The project team has explored vibrant examples of community-led projects - some of which will be presented during this event - to determine triggers and drivers, development patterns, factors of success and evaluation criteria for social innovation in rural areas.

During this final conference, we will present the project’s main findings and discuss their policy implications at all levels (EU, national, regional and local), and with regards to the legislative reforms still in discussion for the next EU programming period 2021-2027.

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Our expert speakers will address the following questions: How can the CAP better align with other policies to better support social innovation/innovation ecosystems in rural areas? How do we make synergies between different European funds and programmes to truly support the development of rural areas and communities? What kind of measures offer the most effective support? How can national and regional level policies better support community empowerment?

*Interpretation will be provided in: English, French, Spanish*



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# AGENDA

9:00-9:30

Registration and coffee

Moderator: Sarah Watson

9:30-10:30

## Opening Session

- Introduction to Social Innovation and to the SIMRA project, **David Miller** (James Hutton Institute, UK)
- Key-note address: “The role of power dynamics in transformative social innovation”, **Flor Avelino** (DRIFT Dutch Research Institute for Transitions, The Netherlands)

10:30-11:30

## Session 1 | How is Social Innovation making a change in rural areas?

*What is social innovation in rural areas and how does it benefit rural communities and economies? This session will present views from policymakers, researchers and practitioners on the development of social innovation in marginalised rural areas and its impact on local populations.*

- “Diversity of social innovations in marginalised rural areas across Europe and around the Mediterranean basin”, **Diana Valero** (University of Highlands and Islands, UK)
- “The importance of social innovation in developing Smart Villages”, **Paul Soto** (ENRD Contact Point)
- SIMRA case example: Forest fire volunteer groups in Catalonia, **Carmen Rodriguez and Xavier Jovés** (CTFC/Secretariat d’Agrupacions de Defensa Forestal, Spain)

11:30-12:00

Coffee break

12:00-13:15

## Session 2 | Emerging innovative practices and their facilitation

*Rural social innovations can emerge in different ways: cooperatives, community trusts, networks, seed funding, etc. This session will analyse the drivers of rural social innovation, including policy drivers.*

- “Social innovation in the context of social Europe”, **Katalin Somody** (Social Innovation Team Leader, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Commission)
- “Implementing a social innovation in rural areas”, **Elena Górriz Mifsud** (European Forest Institute, Spain)
- SIMRA case example: Coaching socially disadvantaged women into developing successful small business initiatives, **Sophie Alkhaled** (Lancaster University, UK)

13:15-14:15

Lunch break

14:15-15:30

### Session 3 | How can public policies support Social Innovation in rural & marginalised areas?

*Having discussed the emergence and the benefits of social innovation in rural areas, this session aims at answering the question will offer a panorama of the policy measures supporting social innovation and of their implementation at all levels.*

- “How to support Social Innovation through the Common Agricultural Policy post-2020?”, **Orsolya Frizon-Somogyi** (DG AGRI, European Commission)
- “Policy recommendations from the SIMRA project”, **Robert Lukesch** (ÖAR, Austria)
- SIMRA case examples:
  - National Forum for Social Agriculture in Italy, **Ilaria Signoriello**
  - Private-public partnerships for dairy producers in Tunisia, **Mohammed Bengoumi** (FAO Subregional Office for North Africa, Tunisia)

15:30-16:00

Coffee break

16:00-17:00

### Panel debate | Changes in policy and practice to enhance social innovation in rural areas – Where next?

*Giving the floor to social innovation stakeholders and European policymakers, this session aims at discussing future policy opportunities to foster social innovation in rural and marginalised areas.*

Panellists:

- **Franz Bogovic**, Member of the European Parliament
- **Tom Jones**, Member of the European Economic and Social Committee
- **Arsène Vinglasson**, President of the SYAPROVAG (Agricultural Union of Vanilla Producers of Guadeloupe)
- **Maya Mathias**, Social Innovation Team, CIPRA International

17:00-17:30

### Closing Session

*Key lessons for socio-economic changes in rural areas through social and community innovations*

- Wrap-up and take-away messages, **Sarah Watson**
- Closing remarks and key messages for future policymaking by **Charles De Chefdebien** and **Alexia Rouby** (DG RTD/DG AGRI, European Commission)

