

Report of the RURENER 2022 event

ENER'do AVE

Portugal



July 6th - 8th

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List of Participants

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Mafalda CABRAL, Sol do AVE, Portugal
António CAMPOS, Póvoa de Lanhoso, Portugal
Miguel CARNEIRO, Vila Boa do Bispo, Portugal
Philippe CORTES, Granges Solaires, France
André COUTINHO, CIM do AVE, Portugal
José COUTINHO, LAG OESTE, Portugal
Marta COUTADA, CIM do AVE, Portugal
Ionel CRISTOFOR, Village of Izvoru Berheciului, Romania
Joana DIAS, Vieira do Minho, Portugal
Capucine DURAND, CC Monts du Lyonnais, France
Susana FALCÃO, Laboratorio da paisagem, Portugal
Daniel FERREIRA, Laboratorio da paisagem/Guimarães, Portugal
Luis GONCALVES, CIM do AVE, Portugal
Petre Damian JICU, Village of Prajesti, Romania
Evangelos KARAGIANNIS, Prespes, Greece
Vassiliki KAZANA, International Hellenic University, Greece
Tibor KÖCSE, Village of Nagypáli, Hungary
Alberto LOPEZ, Diputación de Ávila, Spain
Florian LOUGNON, Syndicat mixte Est Creuse, France
Isabel LOUREIRO, Guimarães, Portugal
José MARTINS, CIM do AVE, Portugal
Sergio MARTINS, Póvoa de Lanhoso, Portugal
Valentin MIRZAC, Village of Colonesti, Romania
Matthieu MOAL, RURENER, France
Michalis PETRAKOS, Prespes, Greece
Adelina PINTO, Guimarães, Portugal
Vasilica RAILEANU, Village of Damienesti, Romania
Daniel RIBEIRO, Vila Boa do Bispo, Portugal



Céline SEINCE, RURENER, France

Andreas SOFOCLEOUS, Village of Agros / PESAP, Cyprus

Bogdan SOLOMON, LAG Colinele Tutovei, Romania

Jozsef STEIER, Village of Nagypáli, Hungary

Georgios STERGIU, Prespes, Greece

Sara TERROSO, Laboratorio da paisagem / Guimarães, Portugal

Gérard THOMAZON, Bussière Saint George, Communauté de communes Creuse Confluence, France

Vincent TURPINAT, Jarnages / Communauté de communes Creuse Confluence, France

Tiago VALE, CIM do AVE, Portugal

Alexandre VERDIER, Chénérailles, France

Over 30 participants from 7 European countries were able to join the event, 8 if you count online participants to the General Assembly meeting on July 8th.

Acknowledgements

This event was made possible by the European Union - who co-funded the festivities under the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme within the Network of Towns call – and the members of the RURENER network who organized and took part in the meeting.

We want to address a special thank you note to the CIM do AVE team, in particular José Martins, Marta Coutada, André Coutinho and Tiago Vale without whom this event could not have happened.

We are very grateful for the trust that the European Commission has put in us by providing funding to the LINK-EU project that aims at organizing four European events in order to foster the European spirit in rural territories around the building of a European Rural Resilience Roadmap. Bringing Europe closer to rural territories has never been so concrete before.

Wednesday 6th of July

Participants arrive in Guimarães and enjoy a walk in the city and its historical center. The group gathers for a welcoming dinner at Café Oriental. Coming from very different territories yet similar in many ways, the diversity of Europe is getting acquainted around a table covered in local Portuguese specialties. This is a promising opening for the two days ahead.

Thursday 7th of July

Official welcome addresses

Adelina Pinto, Marta Coutada, Executive Secretary of CIM do AVE and Michalis Petrakos, in the case of RURENER president Panagiotis Paschalidis are opening the meeting with warm welcome addresses. Adelina Pinto highlights the pride she has to show the city of Guimarães to the group and is looking forward to the exchange of experiences with European counterparts. Guimarães is an ambitious city in term of sustainable development goals and this type of event is a great opportunity to show the



achievements and learn from other territories. Marta Coutada emphasizes the importance of hosting the meeting in CIM do AVE. Indeed, the Intermunicipal Community of Ave developed a Climate Adaptation Plan a few years ago and has been part of the RURENER network and meetings since 2020. Hosting the event is a way to give back what CIM do AVE has been gaining from the RURENER ecosystem but also to move forward with its ambitious plan to fight against climate change and adapt locally to the changes ahead. Finally, Michalis Petrakos apologizes for its mayor, Mr Panagiotis Paschalidis who could not join the meeting in person due to health issues – fortunately for us, he sent a skilled team to represent the Prespes municipality. Michalis Petrakos highlights the need of being part of networks such as RURENER to anticipate on negative impacts in rural communities due to climate change. Already quite vulnerable, rural communities must act now if they don't want to be left behind and suffer from the changes ahead. RURENER, just like the rural communities it represents, is a resilient organization that faced the COVID-19 crisis, and like its rural communities, it finds innovative ways to reach its goals and support communities towards more resilience.

CIM do AVE's climate adaptation plan

Now that the introductory words have been shared, it is time to get to work. Tiago VALE, energy engineer at CIM do AVE presents the CIM do AVE Climate Adaptation Plan and how it mut translate into strategic measures at the intermunicipal level. The ppt presentation is available on demand.

Workshop

The workshop took place in three steps and asked participants to work on three topics:

- Use of resources, urban-rural interdependencies and circular economy
- The mobility challenge in rural areas
- The engagement of rural stakeholders and democratic practices



During the first 40 minutes, three small groups discussed each topic, in particular the end goal of addressing the challenge in question, the current barriers, existing solutions and possible solutions. At the end of the 40 minutes, the group switched topic and had 20 minutes on the second topic, based on what the first group had discussed. It allowed the second group to complete the picture that was presented and nurture it with their own return of experiences. Finally, a last turn was operated and participants had 10 minutes to look at the final topic and bring their contributions. By then, the papers were already pretty full but new ideas continued to come in. In the end, each topic was rich with a co-constructed trajectory, shared and place specific barriers, existing and possible solutions to experiment. Details on the outcomes are available [here](#).

The results of the workshop will be used as the baseline of the shared assessment of rural communities' challenges, first part of the Rural Resilience Roadmap. A summary will be designed and shared online in a public consultation process in order to collect contributions and enrich its content.

Guimarães, European green capital

Isabel Loureiro, general coordinator of Guimarães 2030 – Mission Structure for Sustainable Development gives a short presentation of the ambitions of the city of Guimarães on sustainable development. Aware of the social challenges coming along the environmental and economic challenges, Guimarães has developed both climate mitigation projects and awareness raising, stakeholders' engagement initiatives. Children have been one of the target groups, making the bet that they can reach out to their own parents or grand parents and that they are the future of the city. Guimarães' ambitions are high, in line with the emergency to act! After this introduction and history of Guimarães' engagement, Isabel Loureiro wishes the group a good discovery of the city's road of sustainability with the staff of the landscape laboratory as guides.

The Landscape Laboratory

Before leaving the facility, an introduction of the Landscape Laboratory is in order. Guilherme Braga and Daniel Ferreira are offering us a tour of the place. The Laboratory emerged with the aim to promote knowledge and innovation, research and scientific dissemination, contributing to an integrated and participatory action of environmental policies and sustainable development, aiming at a high level of environmental awareness, an efficient metabolism of cities, well-being and quality citizens' lives, as well as the protection of natural resources.

The Laboratorio is based on a multidisciplinary work, to think and disseminate methodologies and processes inducing ecological, sustainable, inclusive and resilient cities, in order to promote quality of life and sustainable development in urban environments, through the following specific objectives:

- Promoting efficient use of natural resources
- Preserving biodiversity and ecosystem sustainability

- Promoting awareness and awareness campaigns and encouraging a more active role of citizens in defending the quality of the natural and built environment
- Analyzing landscape dynamics to promote the understanding of landscape transformation processes, and the design of creative visions in the use and appropriation of spaces and places.
- Studying solutions that promote eco-efficiency in urban systems based on a holistic vision
- Encouraging the development of innovative projects
- Promoting new economic ranks, stimulating sustainability and economic growth, encouraging the creation and incubation of new business lines in the agricultural, forestry, food, energy and environmental areas.

Related to its environmental education action, the Landscape Laboratory developed a “road of sustainability”, a tour of multiple sites with a high social and environmental value. Guilherme explains the stakes in Guimarães, especially related to land and flood management, looking at a large map of the city and its surroundings.



Botanical gardens

We go on to the road of sustainability, first stop: the botanical gardens. Many retired farmers leave their farms and come to Guimarães to get closer to many facilities and services. While they gain quality of life in the process, they lose the connection to the land that has been a driving force throughout their lives. The botanical gardens are a way for them to keep this connection to the land, but also to pass-it on to their grand-children. The notion of shared space and connection to nature in the middle of the city



sends an important message to urban residents and reminds everyone of the need to take care of this precious environment that is not only a source of leisure, but first and foremost the origin of our food. Today, the gardens cover over 6 hectares, composed of slots of about 25m² assigned to local citizens. The area had to be extended to satisfy the growing demand from citizens. Part of the water used to irrigate the gardens is from the Ribeira da Costa /Couros river that runs through the garden, but most comes from the public water supply as the river is very low during the summer.

Retention basins

Water levels in Guimarães have quite a large variation. While they are very low in the summer as we just pointed out, the city used to get flooded multiple times a year. Indeed, many streams run from the mountains around and when it rains the flow get bigger until it enters the city. Floods in the historical city center were a real burden for the city but also business owners and of course residents. In order to tackle this issue, the city of Guimarães built three retention basins. Two secondary basins that are filling up when the uphill stream flows are increasing until they reach a high point. When the water is too high, a censor informs the main retention basin that closes. While the main basin is closed, the two secondary basins can slowly evacuate they water without flooding the city. If the main basin fills-up, a censor will automatically re-open it and allow the water to flow back in the secondary basins. This is a very rare situation; it causes the water to overflow the secondary retention basins but still prevent the flooding of the city. The facility cost 2 million euros but saved at least as much already by preventing the floods. Water is a rare resource and its management is and will be ever more a key challenge in our towns and cities.



Gymnastics' academy

The Gymnastics' academy is an impressive building covered in local cork, a very efficient construction material that also holds an aesthetic dimension. This building was designed to be as efficient as possible, using natural resources for lighting, heating and cooling (solar and geothermal sources), the water from runoffs for non-potable water uses. Being a sport facility, its comfort was of utmost importance for Guimagym, the users of the building. While we were suffering from the heat outside, after entering the building the group enjoys its thermal comfort immediately. The gymnastics academy is a demonstrator building in terms of efficiency, a central computer manages the heating and cooling systems, the lights are movement sensitive to save energy and powered but solar panels covering the roof.

The building belongs to the municipality who rents it to Guimagym. The management is done by an external service provider. Guimagym also has a policy to make gymnastics accessible to all and offers access to classes and to the facility at a very low cost for all athletes and future athletes.

Enjoying the cool air of the gym has to come to an end and the group heads back to the bus for the final visit of the day.



Penha viewpoint

All the way up the hill is the Penha viewpoint, giving an overview of the entire city of Guimarães and beyond. This short walk is a good way to end our visits of the day, looking at the city from a high point.



Friday 8th of July

General Assembly

After waiting for a few minutes in front of the Alberto Sampaio museum, we are finally welcomed into the place where the General Assembly meeting is going to take place.

While translators are getting ready in their translation booth, the set up for RURENER General Assembly meeting is being arranged. Including in-person and online participants, the meeting presents RURENER's 2021 activities and financial results and ambitions for the coming years. Panagiotis Paschalidis (RURENER President), Michalis Petrakos (representing Prespes presidency), Vassiliki Kazana (RURENER Secretary), Philippe Cortes (RURENER vice-president), Aline Brachet (RURENER treasurer) and Céline Seince (RURENER coordinator) are taking turns to paint the most accurate picture of the RURENER network.

The General Assembly ends with the vote of the resolutions and the election of the board of directors.



What's next?

After the formal General Assembly meeting, it is time to share opportunities and EU level and future collaborations. Matthieu (RURENER) starts by presenting the Technical Assistance programme offered by the Covenant of Mayors office in order to provide support to small municipalities in the implementation of the Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans, with an emphasis on specific topics of interest such as energy communities. A complete description is shared with the participants as well as the contact points within the Covenant of Mayors office. The programme is offered to the Covenant signatories (or in the process) and the first meeting is in September 2022. The full presentation is available on demand.

Later on, project ideas are discussed, mainly the three project ideas in emergence among RURENER members on Sustainable Industrial zones in rural areas, the building of a Participative observatory of

climate policies' impacts and a last one addressing mobility challenges in rural areas. Contact people are identified to continue the discussions later on during the event and afterwards.

Finally, Capucine (CCMDL) gives a short preview of what the next LINK-EU event is going to look like in Les Monts du Lyonnais, France. The date of the meeting is agreed upon collectively: November 30th to December 2nd, 2022. Les Monts du Lyonnais are a rural grouping of municipalities about an hour west of the city of Lyon. The territory has been engaged in the energy transition for many years and has quite a few accomplishments to share such as a NGV station powered by a biogas digester fueling the public transport vehicles among others. This is a good example of the circularity that the territory is willing to achieve, producing and consuming locally from local resources to reduce the environmental impact, ensure a positive social impact by maintaining basic services and contributing to the local economy. This is one example of the many more surprises to come for the ENER'Monts du Lyonnais event!



The museum Alberto Sampaio

Before leaving the museum, the group gets a quick tour to look at some of its treasures.



Founded in 1928, the museum holds different objects and art pieces from the former Collegiate Church of Nossa Senhora da Oliveira and other churches and convents in Guimarães. Going down the stairs from the place of the meeting, we arrive in a medieval cloister. Its irregular shape, which circles the Church of Nossa Senhora da Oliveira, makes it a unique example in Portuguese medieval architecture. The cloister went through many transformations over time, giving it a unique touch.

Passing by the Jewelry room, we climb up the stairs again to enter the Aljubarrota room, one of the main rooms of the Museum. The room was named after the battle of Aljubarrota, fought on 14 August 1385 between King João I of Portugal and King João I of Castile, which was decisive for the consolidation of national independence. This room gathers pieces referring to this important battle, in particular the tunic worn by Dom João I at this very battle and the Triptych of the Nativity, one of the most emblematic pieces of the Museum. The triptych in gilded silver is composed of a central panel and two side steering wheels and embedded in a cedar wood structure, it represents the Birth of the Child Jesus. This piece is classified as a National Treasure.

Time is running out and we must leave the museum already for a closing session around our last local meal at the Cor de Tangerina restaurant.

Closing in Cor de tangerina

Closing the event at the Cor de Tangerina restaurant held a particular significance. For one, the food is vegetarian and composed entirely of local products, contributing to lowering the carbon footprint and highlighting that our personal choices for things as basic as food do have an impact and that changing our habits does not have to be a bad thing. For two, because the meal was accompanied by Daniel Pereira Cristo, a local musician from Braga, specialized in Northern Portugal folklore and instruments. All in all, this was the perfect place to close the meeting, thank all of the organizers and guides and set the next steps before saying good bye.



The ENER' do AVE event was a big success with over 30 people coming from all over rural Europe, which required determination as we all know the mobility challenges in rural areas. The event allowed participants not only to know one another better, but also to work collectively in the building of the Rural Resilience Roadmap. The first stone has been planted and we cannot wait to continue the good work!

Many thanks to all, organizers and participants, guides and drivers for making this event not only possible but fantastic! Special thank you to the Citizens Equality Rights and Values programme for funding the event. All that's left to say is see you soon!