

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**For immediate use**

**The European Rural Parliament**  
**Demands a real Rural Agenda for Europe**

The 4<sup>th</sup> European Rural Parliament was held in Candás, Asturias, Spain from November 6-9, 2019. 335 delegates representing 38 European countries participated, included rural people, representatives of civil society organisations, researchers, national governments and European Union institutions. This was preceded on November 4-6 by the 2<sup>nd</sup> European Rural Youth Parliament ERYP, in which 70 young delegates from 14 countries gathered to share their perspective on rural life. The 2<sup>nd</sup> European Rural Youth Parliament issued a Declaration with 10 calls for action regarding the most urgent challenges faced by young Europeans. Through these very interactive and colourful events, many inspirational talks, workshops, field visits, markets showed the positive energy, ideas and passion of rural people and their organisations.

The European Rural Parliament is a unique and dynamic partnership between 41 national civil society organisations and 6 pan-European rural networks, all working for rural people. The partnership spans most of wider Europe, from Iceland to Turkey and Portugal to Ukraine with an extensive grass-roots membership working with village and community issues.

The participants of the 4<sup>th</sup> European Rural Parliament agreed upon the Rural People's Declaration of Candás Asturias on 9<sup>th</sup> November, after discussions on actual megatrends. What is the political and economic price to pay for exits, exodus and rising populism? Are national governments and EU too attached in growth thinking combined with a dominating urban Agenda? Is sectoral thinking, programming, management and financing the best solution for rural communities and economy?

The Declaration suggests working together in partnership for a "real" Rural Agenda for 2021-2027 recognising the critical importance of rural areas whilst opening the path for flexible, decentralised, territorial and place-based solutions where all stakeholders cooperate for the common good. Strategic, economic, environmental and social plans would take into account the variety of rural realities, even declining ones. We must be ready to better meet existing and upcoming challenges like ageing, social exclusion, immigration, exodus, food security, environment and climate change. New technologies and faster connections bring opportunities, but these are and will be unequal in Europe.

Speaking to the 4<sup>th</sup> ERP, Mihail Dumitru, Deputy Director General of DG Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Commission, supported the value of the ERP in bringing together so many countries and people across Europe with a common passion for the maintenance of our rural territories. The new Commission for 2019-2024 is tasked with "developing a new long-term vision for rural areas and ensuring that the needs of rural areas are specifically catered for in national Strategic Plans under the new CAP"<sup>1</sup>.

The ERP partners will now work to ensure that the voices and messages of the 4<sup>th</sup> ERP Gathering will be heard in the corridors of power in Brussels and also in the national governments across Europe.

**ENDS**

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<sup>1</sup> President Elect Ursula von der Leyen's Mission Letter

## Notes to Editors

**The Rural People's Declaration of Candás** is attached. Photographs are available on request.

The European Rural Parliament is jointly initiated by:

The European Rural Community Alliance	<a href="http://www.ruralcommunities.eu">www.ruralcommunities.eu</a>
PREPARE Partnership for Rural Europe	<a href="http://www.preparenetwork.org">www.preparenetwork.org</a>
European LEADER Association for Rural Development	<a href="http://www.elard.eu">www.elard.eu</a>

The 4<sup>th</sup> European Rural Parliament was attended by rural citizens from 38 countries, including:  
(inside the EU) Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom –with participants from England, N. Ireland, Scotland, Wales.  
(outside the EU) Albania, Armenia, Belarus, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine.

**The host for the 4<sup>th</sup> European Rural Parliament** was Red Asturiana de Desarrollo Rural (READER)

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**European Rural Parliament websites:** [www.europeanruralparliament.com](http://www.europeanruralparliament.com) and [www.erp2019.eu](http://www.erp2019.eu)

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