

REPORT OF THE 2nd TRAINING - SPAIN

Innovation in the field of socio-economic development and rural tourism

Place: Spain: Yeste (Albacete) and Cazorla (Jaén)

Date: Tuesday 8th, Wednesday 9th and Thursday 10th of June, 2021

List of participants:

- Hungarian National Rural Network (Hungary): Dorina Gulyás ; Agnes Tóth
- Leader France (France): Alexis Lebrat ; Nolwenn Huby ; Marie de Bizien ; Michaël Spada ; François Galabrun
- REDR (Spain): Maria-José Murciano-Sanchez ; Secundino Caso Roiz ; Irene Martín-García
- Local members of REDR (Spain):

Program:

Day 1 (Yeste):

- Civil participation and decision-making: Local Participation Forums
- Rural Tourism and local gastronomy
- Services for the elderly people

Day 2 and 3 (Cazorla):

- Oil market and rural tourism
- Renewable energies
- Leisure and culture

INTRODUCTION

GLOBAL ISSUES IN SPAIN

While more than 80% of the Spanish territory is a rural area, it is home to only 20% of the country's population. The structuring of local public services in these territories is a major challenge. Another major challenge for rural areas is the ageing of the Spanish population, compounded by the exodus of young people to urban areas.

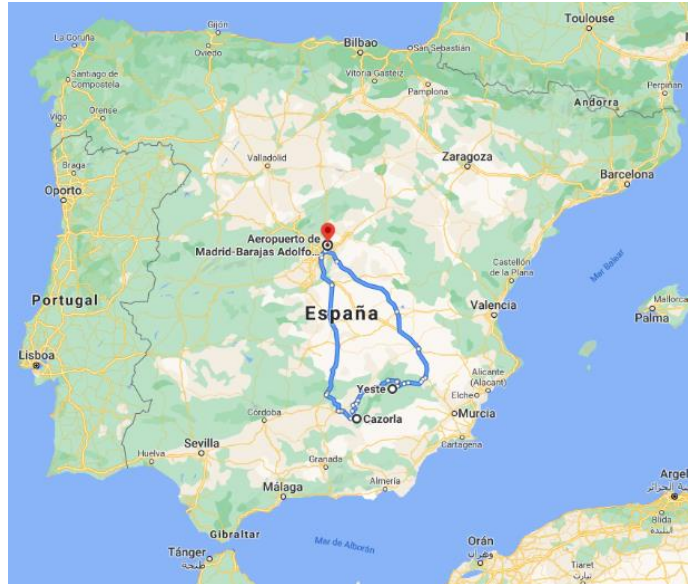
60% of the Spanish surveyed in the macro-survey that we have launched at REDR at a European level affirm that a greater number of proximity services and of better quality are the most determining factor that arise when thinking about living in a rural area. The services most valued by the respondents are, in this order: health and care; education; care services for the elderly and dependents; connectivity; affordable housing; digitization of services; transport; leisure offer; consumer services; and access to financial services.

The aging of the Spanish population, one of the longest-lived in the world -only behind Japan- is also a huge challenge for rural areas, which do not have public structures designed for this situation. Likewise, the exodus of young people to urban areas multiplies this effect.

INNOVATION IN THE FIELD OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND RURAL TOURISM

This ESPRIT training focused on several topics, all of them related with the resources of the region and the rural development strategies of the LAGs, which are very similar to each other since they share the natural environment where they are located: **Natural Park of Sierras de Cazorla, Segura y las Villas.**

On the one hand, **rural tourism is a keystone** in both territories and it functions as a tool to make visible the natural landscapes, flora and fauna. It **dynamizes the economy and promotes job creation** since with a wide range of economic activities linked with tourism, such as gastronomy, catering industry or hiking.



The olive culture is at the center of the productive activity in both regions and thanks to local initiatives, it has become another pillar for the revitalization of the region. Nowadays, apart from the agricultural production, there is a wide variety of activities linked with it, **like the tasting of olive oil, the craft with olive wood or the biomass based on olive's pit.**

On the other hand, **social services like care-services for elderly people or the promotion of culture** have also been showed during the visits and it made visible how it is possible to combine an economic strategy with social initiatives for different groups of people. Care-services for elderly people, usually forgotten in public policies and market strategies are essential in order to build a cohesive society. Also, cultural dissemination through festivals or museums works as a tool to **materialize the resources of the territory as well as to change the imaginary that society usually has in relation with rural areas.** The promotion of culture encourages a stronger society and revitalize the environment.

Therefore, the main topic of this training was **socio-economic development**, since it focusses on different services that are offered in order to diversify the local economy as well as social initiatives that searches a cohesive society.

This ESPRIT training developed several topics, all of them related with the main resources of the region and the rural development strategies of the LAGs. The main topic of this visit was **socio-economic development**, since it focused on different services that are offered in order to diversify the local economy and encourage people to settle or stay in the town.

REPORT

YESTE, ALBACETE – DAY 1

Yeste is a town in Albacete with a population of approximately 2,600 inhabitants which lays in the western side of the magnificent **environment of Sierra del Segura**.

It faces the same problems as the rest of rural areas: depopulation and ageing. Nevertheless, Yeste offers a wide range of public services and activities which aims to dynamize the economy and society all along with sustainable development.



What we did in Yeste?

The European participants met the Local Action Group of the Sierra del Segura in the castle of Yeste, and discovered the work carried out during the last 25 years in the region.

The day began with the reception of all the participants by the president of the GAL Sierra del Segura, Cortes Buendía. After her, Jesús Ortega, president of RECAMDER, presented the great role of the new Depopulation Law in Castilla-La Mancha in the rural world. Next, Secundino Caso, president of REDER explained how important cooperation between countries is and how much can be learned from seeing projects and ways of working of the different local action groups both nationally and internationally.

Then, the European participants were able to learn about our way of working and managing funds with the complete intervention made by the local LAG manager Rafa Fernández, who highlighted the importance of Leader for the Sierra del Segura, making known its influence in the region.

José Manuel, GAL technician, presented the experience of the participation forums held in the region from 2008 to the present, which has led to the launch of interesting projects for our twelve municipalities.



In addition, they were able to learn first-hand through a **table of experiences**, some interesting projects developed in the region, through different groups, entrepreneurs, non-profit associations and city councils, such as:

- Creation of a network of Trails “Walk through Yeste” and via ferrata, carried out by the Yeste Tourism Association.
- Adaptation of facilities at Camping Rio Tus, carried out by Carlos Aguilar (manager of the campsite).
- Adaptation of a rehabilitation center for patients with a high degree of disability in its facilities, carried out by the Yeste Residence for the Elderly.
- Adapted computer center, adaptation of the vehicle for the disabled and a network of approved trails created in the vicinity of the urban area of Yeste, carried out by the Tindavar Association.

- The Sierra del Segura Tourism Association presented the latest projects carried out in the Sierra del Segura and the great coordination work they are doing together with the local action group, with the creation of a Federation of Rural Tourism Associations in CLM.

The morning ended with the intervention of Luis Llopis, president of the Association Romeros de San Bartolomé, who explained the important project that the association carried out to create an interpretation center in the castle of Yeste and made a guided tour of the castle to all participants.

After lunch, the participants visited the Camping Rio Tus and saw the changes that have taken place in it thanks to the help of Leader managed by the Local Action Group and the surroundings in Collado Tornero, village of Yeste, where the next project of the Yeste Tourism Association will be developed very soon, an attractive semi-aquatic route.

What we learnt in Yeste?

Civil participation and decision-making: Local Participation Forums

Civil involvement and their participation in decision-making are essential in order to have comprehensive approach for rural development and that is why it will be one of the main topics. Civil forums are one of the main pillars of LEADER, **since it leads to a community-led initiatives**, based on the needs and potential of the region.

Rural Tourism and local gastronomy

Rural tourism is another important stone for the development of the area, since it is located in a marvelous spot and it can dynamize the area as well as expand the opportunities for the population, since it works in several areas (gastronomy, promotion of the nature, catering...).

Services for the elderly people

Socio-economic development **cannot be achieved without care services** for the population, especially for the most vulnerable people. Elderly people are usually forgotten in the day-to-day life and most of the time they do not have the tools to adapt to new technologies and communications. It is essential to take care of these people, especially in rural areas, where they usually have a smaller supply of leisure activities, even if they constitute a high percentage of the population.

CAZORLA, JAÉN – DAY 2 AND 3

Cazorla is a town in the southeast of Jaén, with approximately 7,500 inhabitants. It is located in the heart of Sierra de Cazorla and it is one of the landmarks of the region.

Cazorla, as well as Yeste, counts with a big amount of natural resources, all of them linked with the magnificent geography where it is. **The Natural Park of the Sierras of Cazorla, Segura y las Villas is the largest protected natural area in Spain** and in most countries of Europe.



This nature area includes most of the Sierras de Cazorla y Segura Biosphere Reserve, designated by the UNESCO in 1983. The Cazorla, Segura y Las Villas Nature Reserve has an area of 200,000 hectares and spectacularly beautiful scenery, as well as being home to various species which are unique in the world.

These **200,000 hectares of mountains** are located to the northwest of Jaén, with leafy pinewoods containing unique species such as the Cazorla violet, the Valverde lizard, a narcissus that is claimed to be the smallest in the world, and a particular carnivorous plant. This is the birthplace of the Guadalquivir (in the site known as the Cañada de las Fuentes, at a height of over 1,330 metres) and Segura rivers. The Reserve covers lands from **23 municipal districts** in the regions of Cazorla, Segura, Quesada and Las Villas, and has the privilege of being home to various species such as the Spanish ibex, red deer and wild boar, as well as mouflons, which can be seen living in semi-captivity in the Collado del Almendral game park.

What we did in Cazorla?

Sierra De Cazorla Rural Development Association has received the European partners on June 9 and 10.

The program and themes devised by the LAG SIERRA DE CAZORLA have included visits and workshops related to:

- projects financed by LEADER in the Sierra de Cazorla,
- management of cultural and natural heritage with Alma Gaia and approach to the culture of Virgin Olive Oil and Oleorum Oleotourism (with oil tasting, visit to Aceites Cazorla cooperative and the Sierra de Cazorla Regulatory Council),
- the territory's commitment to renewable energies, especially biomass as well as visits to the facilities of the Municipal Pool of Cazorla and Hotel Spa Sierra de Cazorla.
- workshop on culture, sport and leisure economy and on how to enhance the potential of a territory with the support of municipalities and the participation of the population.

So, Toni Marín, manager of the GAL SIERRA DE CAZORLA, presented the Sierra de Cazorla Development Strategy and the participants attended a workshop called "Commitment of rural municipalities to culture and sports as a motor of development", with the participation and experiences of: De Pozo Alcón City Council, Cazorla City Council, Quesada and La Iruela City Council, as well as the entities: Colectivo 3 de Omega and Ricardo Moreno from the direction of the Ultra Southern Forest Trail.

These participants shared their initiatives in the territory:

- cultural events, such as the Cazorla Blues Festival or the FIT Cazorla International Theater Festival, the Del Agua-Sierra Del Pozo Festival,
- sporting events such as the Ultra Trail Bosques del Sur or the Sierra de Triathlon in Pozo Alcón
- the commitment and enhancement of the cultural heritage of the municipality of Quesada (Zabaleta and Miguel Hernández Museum, Jose Luis Verdes), or the set of Levantine rock art, and the world heritage site of the Roman Villa of Bruñel.
- In addition, a manifesto on the importance of culture and arts in general and in rural areas was provided by the Omega 3 Collective.

The program ended with the experience of the Transhumance through the district of Burunchel (La Iruela).

What we learnt in Cazorla?

Oil market and rural tourism

The oil market is one the main pillars of the economy of the region and it is related with many other initiatives related with tourism and economy dynamization. The enhancement of the value of the oil and the creation of new products through innovation has developed a **new market**, capable of creating jobs and mobilizing endogenous resources. Also, it has been possible thanks to a collaborative approach, which led olive workers to join forces in cooperatives.

Renewable energies

Cazorla is a pioneer municipality in the application of renewable energies based on the olive pit. Several locations in the town are now working thank to this type of energy and they have demonstrated it is 100% viable. Also, it shows **how a small town can lead the way to 2030 Agenda**, since this is a suitable example of what can be done in rural areas for sustainability and circular economy.

Leisure and culture

Cazorla is also one of the cradles of culture dissemination in rural areas in Spain though festivals, museums, cinema or sports. Rural development of villages cannot be achieved without working on what brings life to its people: art, literature, music, cinema...Culture can function also as a rural attraction for any kind of tourists such as families or young people.

Detailed program

TUESDAY, 8TH JUNE. YESTE (ALBACETE)

8:30	Breakfast
9:30	Reception of visitors at Yeste Castle yard.
9:45	Welcome by Cortes Buendía, President of Sierra del Segura Local Action Group
10:15	Presentation and contextualization of Sierra del Segura region.
10:35	Citizen participation forums, LEADER project
10:50	Projects financed by Sierra del Segura Local Action Group. Table of experiences: - Local tourism association. - Association of regional tourism. - Tindavar Association (production of olive oil). - Tourism entrepreneur in the area. - Honorato Fernández Foundation.
11:30	Debate and question time
11:50	Visit to the Historical Interpretation Center of the Order of Santiago (guided visit by Luis Llopis Blázquez. President Romeros de San Bartolomé Association)
13:00	Departure to "Camping del Río Tus"
13:35	Visit to the ecological garden of the "Río Tus Camping"
14:15	Lunch based on local products and zero-kilometre in "Camping del Río Tus" (16€/person)
15:45	Visit to the Río Tus Camping complex.
16:30	Walk of approximately 2 km to the viewpoint of the Arroyo de los Marines.
18:30	Return to Yeste
19:00	Free time
20:00	Dinner in the Hotel la Alberquilla

WEDNESDAY, 9TH JUNE. YESTE (ALBACETE)- CAZORLA (JAÉN)

9:00	Breakfast in the hotel
10:00	Departure to Cazorla (Jaén)
13:00	Arrival to Cazorla (<i>Hotel Villa Turística de Cazorla</i>) (41€/person/ night). <i>Breakfast included</i>
14:30	Lunch in Mesón Leandro (25€/ person)
16:30-17:30	Historical Centre of Cazorla: Ruinas de Santa María - Bóveda / Molino Harinero / Project of reintroduction of the Bearded vulture
17:30-18:30	Oil tasting: AGRARIA OLEARUM
19:00-20:00	Municipal swimming pool of Cazorla , Installations with the use of biomass for thermal purposes (olive pit)
21:00	Dinner. Taberna Lusco (<i>around 20€, to be confirmed</i>)

THURSDAY, 10TH JUNE. CAZORLA (JAÉN) - MADRID

9:00-9:15	<p>Welcome in the Town Hall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Antonio José Rodríguez. Mayor of Ayuntamiento de Cazorla - Iván Cruz. President of LAG Sierra de Cazorla / Mayor of Pozo Alcón
9:15-9:45	<p>Talk with LAG Sierra de Cazorla: Development Strategy Sierra de Cazorla 2020 (description of the territory and strategic lines)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Juan Antonio Marín. LAG SIERRA DE CAZORLA Manager
10:00-12:00	<p>Workshop. Rural world and culture:</p> <p>Commitment of rural municipalities to culture and sport as an engine of development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iván Cruz Lozano (Mayor of the Pozo Alcón City Council and President of LAG SIERRA DE CAZORLA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Water Festival - Sierra de Cazorla Triathlon • Antonio José Rodríguez (Mayor of Cazorla City Council) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - International Festival BluesCazorla - International Theater Festival - Ultra Trail Bosques del Sur - Others: La Tragantía, Advancement Party, Cazorla Suena, Miguel Picazo, local artists, cinema. • Manuel Vallejo (Mayor of Quesada City Council) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Zabaleta and Miguel Hernández Museum - Valorization of the Archaeological Heritage: Set of Levantine rock art and schematic World Heritage Site, Roman Villa of Bruñel • Daniel Sánchez (Mayor of La Iruela City Council) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Historical-artistic complex: - Castle of La Iruela - South Forest MTB Marathon • Christophe Berville - Xtóbal. (Colectivo 3 de Omega - Cazorla Association of Plastic and Audiovisual Arts professionals) • Ricardo Moreno. Ultra Trail Race Director Southern Forests
12:15-13:15	<p>Oil cooperative. ACEITES CAZORLA SCA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Manuel Martínez. Aceites Cazorla SCA manager - Representative of Regulatory Denomination of Origin Sierra de Cazorla Council (Extra Virgin Olive Oil)
13:30-14:15	<p>Hotel Spa Sierra de Cazorla. (First hotel in Spain working with biomass of olive pits for thermal purposes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carmen Amores. Hotel Spa Sierra de Cazorla Director <p>Snack</p>
14:30	Lunch. Hotel el Curro (16€/ person)
16:00	Departure to Madrid
20:00	Arrival to Madrid – PCR test