

# **CLAUSURA RIO- INTERNATIONAL OBSERVATORY OF RURAL RESEARCH**

**Dear Rector of the Vigo University**

**Authorities and representatives**

**Ladies and gentlemen participants in this Ourense  
Rural Summit**

**Thank you very much indeed for your intensive work  
during these days in our province.**

**For me it is an honour, personally and institutionally,  
to participate in this act jointly with the Rector, a  
person who also believes in rural areas and whose  
vision and policies in this area are like 100%. Thank  
you very much Rector for your receptivity and  
commitment.**

*“If politics is the art of the possible, research is surely the art of the soluble. Both are immensely practical-minded affairs”*. Peter Medawar

And this was, our practical mentality, what led us to the Universidade de Vigo and the Deputación de Ourense to create the **INTERNATIONAL OBSERVATORY OF RURAL RESEARCH**, an entity whose mission is to analyze, investigate and launch vanguard projects in the rural. The Diputación de Ourense has made it possible, and you, through the University of Vigo, have worked on the art of the soluble, that is, on solutions.

The Ourense Rural Summit, which we are closing today, has already become the leading international scientific event in rural development through the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals set out in the 2030 Agenda.

Look at the work you have done during these 4 days using the province of Ourense as a living lab. Look at the public-private strategic alliances that have been planned. It is incredible because you have proposals really

committed with the alignment of scientific knowledge with the rural world, and thus you are in the way of creation a RURAL INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM.

The Strategy that you have carried out in these days will be integrated into the main actions that define my Mandate Program 7273, and will mark the roadmap in the area of social, environmental and economic innovation in the rural areas of Ourense allowing replicate initiatives, ideas and projects in similar areas of Europe and Latin America.

I will highlight the challenges that we sign today and I will disseminate your conclusions to the different national and European stakeholders and in which Ourense is represented, such as the FEMP, Partenalia, EHTTA and Cepli.

Intermediate governments are struggling to take the provinces into account in the design and distribution of structural and investment funds. Events like this and your conclusions and innovative ideas demonstrate, once again, that intermediate governments are right and that we have resources and capacity to execute large projects.

Galicia has lost 40% of the cohesion funds from the previous period and may run out of funds in the next period. Does this mean that Galicia has achieved the objectives of convergence, competitiveness and cooperation of other European regions in transition?

The Atlantic axis and the big cities yes, but the interior provinces no. In this sense, the provincial government of Ourense has a tool that calculates these indicators and compares them with the regional result, the Ourense Economic Observatory, proof of our technical capacity.

You have proven it, in Ourense we know that depopulation and rural aging can be a strength and not a weakness, but we need financial support to boost projects. The Ourense Provincial Council is launching important actions in this line and today they are also reflected in the success of OURENSE RURAL SUMMIT.

Smart Province, icon of the 2015-2019 mandate, received recognition from both the public and private sectors. With this project, we demonstrate that the SmartCity concept should not be linked only to large cities or infrastructure,

as it would generate large differences between citizens, so we created SmartProvince, with which we unified and centralized efforts in a large project that brought together the management of 92 municipalities .

We defended, we believed in a global vision of the province. Now in Horizon Europe they talk about SmartRural: digital health, educational innovations, e-tourism, collection and treatment of rural waste, open government and open data ... in the Diputación de Ourense we have been working since 2015 on these lines that in Horizon Europe will have a very important budget to finance proposals and projects.

Of course, we need to build a new story for the rural; the rural in positive, as an opportunity for Spain and for Europe, and the work you have been doing, gives meaning and support to this idea.

This event has linked the best of rural and academic world, becoming a meeting point for the generation of innovative local experiences. With the effort of all participants, you have been able to analyze the 17 Goals

and their application in rural areas to reach proposals for a  
**RURAL INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM.**

Good job!! Thank you all for your perseverance and effort  
during the celebration of the Ourense Rural Summit.