EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

(To be filled in and uploaded as deliverable in the Portal Grant Management System, at the due date foreseen in the system.

Please provide one sheet per event (one event = one workpackage = one lump sum).)

PROJECT	
Participant:	Ayuntamiento de Rio
PIC number:	889765675
Project name and acronym:	*Connecting Rural Europe: Networking and development in small towns* **Rural EU**

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	WP9
Event name:	Rural intercultural festival (Spain) — EuRío, Festival Cultural do Rural
Type:	Festival
In situ/online:	In situ
Location:	San Xoán de Río, Ourense, Galicia (Spain)
Date(s):	12/08/2026 - 13/08/2026
Website(s) (if any):	https://www.sanxoanderio.es/gl/nova/eurio-festival-cultural-do-rural
Participants	
Female:	89
Male:	87

Non-binary:	0		
From country 1 [Spain]:	170		
From country 2 [Italy]:	2		
From country 3 [Croatia]:	2		
From country 4 [Romania]:	2		
Total number of participants:	176	From total number of countries:	4

Description

Provide a short description of the event and its activities.

The activity took place in San Xoán de Río between 12/08/2026 and 13/08/2026. San Xoán de Río is a municipality of 510 inhabitants scattered across more than 50 hamlets at 888 m of altitude, on the eastern edge of the Ribeira Sacra, in inland Galicia. International participants arrived from 11/08 and departed on 14/08; the two festival days themselves were 12 and 13 August, and it is for those two days that the presence sheets were signed.

The festival was built around the total solar eclipse of 12 August 2026, whose path of totality crossed precisely this strip of Galicia — the first total eclipse visible from mainland Spain in more than a century. The Concello used that date as the occasion to open a local celebration to an international audience and to bring back residents who have emigrated. The main themes addressed over the two days were local history and heritage tourism, the natural resources of the territory and their sustainable use, and European citizenship in rural areas — all three approached as assets on which a small municipality can build a future for its young people, rather than as relics of its past. The following activities were organised as part of the festival:

1) Guided visit to the Ribeira Sacra: river canyon, heroic viticulture and monastic heritage

The first day opened with a boat journey along the Sil canyon, between walls dropping some 500 m to the river, followed by a tasting of Ribeira Sacra wines and a visit to the 10th-century Benedictine monastery of Santo Estevo de Ribas de Sil. The guided commentary covered the formation of the canyon, the monastic settlement of the valley from the 6th century onwards, and above all what is locally called heroic viticulture: vineyards planted on terraces cut into near-vertical slopes and worked entirely by hand since Roman times, because no machine can reach them. The discussion with participants focused on how a labour-intensive traditional production model can still be economically viable today, on the role of denomination-of-origin schemes and wine tourism in sustaining it, and on the fact that the landscape itself only survives as long as someone keeps farming it. The international delegations compared this with the agricultural models and the land abandonment problems of their own rural areas.

2) Observation of the total solar eclipse from the Os Biocos astronomical observatory

On the evening of 12 August the whole group, together with the local community, climbed to the hilltop above the village where the Os Biocos astronomical observatory stands, chosen for its completely open western horizon. Totality began at 20:29:36 and lasted 39 seconds, with the Sun only 10° above the skyline. Certified eclipse glasses were distributed by the Concello and the observation was accompanied by explanations of the phenomenon. Beyond the astronomical event itself, the activity made a point that was repeated throughout the festival: the absence of light pollution, normally described as a deficiency of remote rural areas, is in fact a natural resource. The municipality has built a small observatory on this hilltop precisely to exploit it, and the eclipse was used as a live demonstration of how dark skies can generate scientific and tourism activity in a place of 510 inhabitants.

3) Open-air community evening: dinner, Galician orquesta and DJ set on the hilltop

Dinner, live music and a DJ set followed on the same hilltop, beside the observatory, open to the whole village and to the visitors who had travelled for the eclipse. The music was provided by La Ocaband, a Galician orquesta

— a large touring show band with a brass section that plays pop, rock, cumbia and traditional repertoire in a single night, a format that is one of the living institutions of village festivals in Galicia and an economic sector in its own right. The evening was deliberately intergenerational: the August festival is one of the few occasions in the year when the whole municipality, including the emigrants who return for the summer, gathers in the same place, and it was in that setting that the international guests met the local population.

4) Guided visit to the Roman gold mines with a geologist, and hands-on heritage activity

On the morning of 13 August participants walked the Roman open-cast gold works on the slopes of Serra das Cabanas, guided by a geologist. The site consists of four circular pits, locally called biocos, between 10 and 35 m deep and joined by underground galleries: the largest Roman gold works in Galicia, opened some 2,000 years ago. The guided route covered the geology of the deposit and how the gold-bearing strata were formed, the Roman extraction technique — the diversion and storage of water to collapse the hillside by hydraulic force — the scale of the imperial mining operation in the north-west of Hispania, and the lasting marks it left on the landscape, including the Vía Nova Roman road and the water channels still visible today. A hands-on heritage activity followed. The theme throughout was the long history of resource extraction in this territory and what it leaves behind: the same hillside that was mined by the Roman Empire now carries an astronomical observatory, which gave participants a concrete image of a rural territory reinventing the use of its own assets, and an example of archaeological heritage turned into a visitable resource.

5) Community gathering at the river pool and traditional Galician dance workshop

The afternoon took place at the river recreational area, the village's main summer meeting point, with a shared lunch prepared with local produce. It continued with a traditional Galician dance workshop open to all ages and to all four nationalities, with no previous experience required. The purpose was the direct transmission of intangible heritage between the local community and the international guests, and the workshop functioned as the main informal mixing point of the festival.

6) pUEzzle — premiere of a cooperative game on European citizenship

Europe Direct Galicia premiered pUEzzle, a life-size cooperative game played outdoors on a canvas representing the European Union, designed for participants aged 18 to 30 and requiring no previous knowledge of the EU. Mixed international teams had to solve challenges on European rights, institutions and opportunities; the game has no individual winner, and a team only progresses if it cooperates. This was the explicitly civic component of the programme: it addressed EU citizenship rights and the mobility, funding and participation opportunities open to young people in rural areas, which are precisely the ones least likely to reach them through ordinary channels.

7) Macizas Centrais — live performance by pandereteiras

The group Macizas Centrais performed immediately after the game, at the same river pool. Pandereteiras are players of the Galician tambourine, a tradition of percussion and collective singing historically carried by women and transmitted orally from one generation to the next. The performance closed the daytime programme and connected the festival's cultural content with a form of heritage that is still alive and still being passed on locally.

8) Shared meals with local produce and contact with local producers

Throughout the two days, all meals were taken collectively in local establishments and outdoors, prepared with produce from the area — including the wines of the Ribeira Sacra tasted on the first day — with the aim of promoting local food production and of keeping the international delegations and the local community in continuous contact rather than in parallel programmes.

All the activities described above were open to the local community and were attended jointly by residents and by the delegations from the partner organisations in Italy, Croatia and Romania, so that the exchange between rural territories took place within the ordinary life of the village rather than in sessions reserved for the project. Attendance exceeded the number of participants originally foreseen for this event. The figures reported above count the participants who signed the presence sheets of 12 and 13 August 2026, which are submitted together with this sheet.

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	01.04.2022	Initial version (new MFF).