

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:	1 – Comune di Ardara
PIC number:	938580731
Project name and acronym:	ARDARA ² – Two Lands, One European Vision

EVENT DESCRIPTION			
Event number:	1		
Event name:	ARDARA ² – First Twinning Event in Ardara, Ireland: Two Lands, One European Vision		
Type:	Town twinning event / institutional and citizen dialogue / cultural and community exchange		
In situ/online:	In situ		
Location:	Ireland – Ardara, County Donegal		
Date(s):	7-9 August 2026		
Website(s) (if any):	https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/projects-details/43251589/101287598		
Participants			
Female:	145		
Male:	133		
Non-binary:	n.a.		
From country 1 - ITALY:	28		
From country 2 - IRELAND:	250		
Total number of participants:	278	From total number of countries:	2
Description			
<i>Provide a short description of the event and its activities.</i>			

Overview and objectives

The first town twinning event of **ARDARA² – Two Lands, One European Vision** took place from **7 to 9 August 2026 in Ardara, County Donegal, Ireland**. It brought together the visiting delegation from Ardara, Sardinia, and representatives and members of the Irish host community, marking the beginning of the project's face-to-face exchange between the two namesake communities. The project is coordinated by the **Comune di Ardara**, with **Awake Tourism CLG** as associated partner in Ireland. **Focus Europe ETS** supported the development of the project and the connection between the two communities.

Following the exchanges with EACEA concerning the implementation timetable, the chronological order of the two events was reversed. The Irish meeting was therefore implemented as the first project event, while the reciprocal meeting in Ardara, Sardinia, will serve as the concluding event.

The event addressed the project's objectives of strengthening mutual understanding, solidarity, inclusive participation and European awareness through direct contact between citizens. Particular attention was given to the cultural and linguistic heritage of the two communities and to the opportunities for cooperation between small rural and geographically peripheral territories. The project seeks to develop a relationship involving citizens, young people, associations and local institutions, with the intention of sustaining these connections beyond the individual exchanges.

Agenda of the event

Day 1 – Friday, 7 August 2026

Institutional welcome, community encounter and exchange of local traditions

The first day opened with an institutional reception at the **Nesbitt Arms Hotel in Ardara**, bringing together the Italian delegation and representatives of the Irish hosting community. The meeting involved **Francesco Dui**, Mayor of Ardara, Sardinia; **Gary Doherty**, Cathaoirleach of Donegal County Council; **Anthony Molloy**, Chair of Glenties Municipal District; and **Seán Cannon-Earley**, representing **Awake Tourism CLG**. The reception marked the opening of the exchange between the two communities.

The welcome addressed the opportunities offered by the partnership and the cultural and linguistic heritage of the two territories. The Irish representatives highlighted the communities' rural roots and strong local identities. The contribution of those who had helped establish the relationship was acknowledged, including a tribute to the late Stephen McCahill of Awake Tourism.

During the visit, Mayor Francesco Dui emphasised the importance of involving young people in the exchange as participants in the present and contributors to the future of their communities. He expressed the intention to develop a lasting relationship grounded in solidarity and local development, and looked ahead to welcoming the Irish community to Sardinia for the reciprocal encounter.

The institutional welcome was followed by a community dinner at the **Nesbitt Arms Hotel**. The Sardinian delegation shared local food and wine with the Irish hosts, introducing products from Ardara and the surrounding area. This exchange of local specialities accompanied the first contacts between the visitors and their hosts.

Day 2 – Saturday, 8 August 2026

Textile heritage, local enterprise and participation in community life

Visit to John Molloy Factory and weaving demonstration

The Italian delegation visited **John Molloy Factory / John Molloy Woollen Mills**, where participants attended a **weaving demonstration**. The visit introduced the group to an expression of the host community's textile and productive heritage, complementing the institutional meetings with direct observation of a local craft activity.

Within the programme, the visit formed part of the exploration of **local heritage and rural identity**. Its purpose was to connect the discovery of local production with the project's wider interest in traditions, community identity and opportunities for exchange between rural territories.

Visit to Ardara Distillery

The delegation also visited **Ardara Distillery** as part of the programme dedicated to discovering local enterprises and the productive heritage of the host territory. Together with the textile visit, this activity brought participants into contact with another aspect of local economic life.

The agenda framed the distillery visit around the relationship between **territory, identity, the rural economy and community-based development**. In the context of ARDARA², the activity therefore complemented the cultural exchange by introducing a local enterprise within the community that was hosting the delegation.

Participation in the Ardara Agriculture and Industrial Show 2026

The delegation attended the **Ardara Agriculture and Industrial Show 2026** on Saturday. Participation in the show connected the twinning exchange with a wider gathering of the host community and complemented the visits to local enterprises.

The programme associated this activity with the theme “**Rural communities and the future of Europe**”, providing a context for contact with local citizens, associations, exhibitors and other community actors. The intended civic and intercultural focus was to use participation in community life as an opportunity for exchange on rural identities, local traditions and cooperation between the two Ardara communities.

Community radio interview and communication of the exchange

During the visit, **Mayor Francesco Dui was interviewed by the local community radio station Owenea FM**. The interview formed part of the communication surrounding the twinning and brought the visiting community's perspective to a local audience.

The interview and wider coverage complemented the face-to-face encounters, while the publication of photographs and accounts of the visit documented the institutional reception, the local enterprise visits and participation in community activities

Day 3 – Sunday, 9 August 2026 Shared reflection, closing and future cooperation

The final morning combined a visit to Assaranca Waterfall and Glengesh mountain pass with reflection on the relationship between landscape, local identity and rural heritage. Participants then joined the closing exchange with Awake Tourism CLG and representatives of the host community. The discussion reviewed the visit, shared observations and explored perspectives for continuing the relationship between the two Ardara communities. The closing exchange also provided an opportunity to look ahead to the reciprocal event in Sardinia and to acknowledge the contribution of the organisations and citizens involved in hosting the delegation.

Evaluation and participant feedback

Following the event, an anonymous bilingual questionnaire was circulated as part of the project's monitoring and evaluation activities. It addressed European belonging, knowledge of the other community, awareness of the European Union's role in supporting cooperation between local communities, intercultural interaction, inclusion, satisfaction and interest in future exchanges.

The questionnaire used a **retrospective before-and-after comparison**: respondents were asked, after the event, to recall their perceptions before participating and compare them with their perceptions following the experience. The findings presented below refer to the responses available as of **29 September 2026**, provided by respondents resident in Italy. They describe respondents' self-reported perceptions and should not be interpreted as representative of all event participants or of both communities.

For the comparison items, ratings of **4 or 5 on the five-point scale** were grouped as high or very high.

The results were as follows:

<u>Evaluation area</u>	<u>Before the event, assessed retrospectively</u>	<u>After the event</u>	<u>Change</u>
High or very high sense of belonging to Europe	41.7%	75.0%	+33.3 percentage points
High or very high familiarity with the culture, traditions and daily life of the other Ardara community	8.3%	75.0%	+66.7 percentage points
High or very high awareness of the EU's role in supporting cooperation between local communities	33.3%	83.3%	+50.0 percentage points

These percentages were calculated from the individual selections recorded in the questionnaire export. The comparison indicates perceived gains in European belonging, knowledge of the other community and awareness of the European dimension of local cooperation.

Mutual understanding and interaction.

100% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the event helped them better understand the similarities and differences between the two Ardara communities, including **83.3% who strongly agreed**. Similarly, **100% agreed or strongly agreed** that the activities encouraged meaningful interaction between Italian and Irish participants. These findings indicate a positive assessment of the opportunities for direct contact and intercultural exchange.

Inclusion and active participation.

100% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they felt welcomed, respected and able to participate actively in the activities. Within this result, **83.3% strongly agreed**. The responses therefore provide positive feedback on the participation environment experienced by those who completed the questionnaire.

Interest in European cooperation and cultural diversity.

100% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the event increased their interest in European cooperation and town twinning initiatives, with **66.7% strongly agreeing**. Likewise, **100% agreed or strongly agreed** that the experience strengthened their perception of cultural diversity as a positive element of European identity, again with **66.7% strongly agreeing**.

Interest in continued cooperation.

100% of respondents strongly agreed that they would be interested in participating in future exchanges or cooperation activities between Ardara, Sardinia, and Ardara, Donegal. This finding provides an indication of interest in maintaining the relationship initiated through the first event.

Overall satisfaction and recommendation.

100% of respondents selected either “very satisfied” or “excellent experience” when evaluating their overall participation, with **91.7% selecting the highest rating**. Furthermore, **100% would**

recommend participation in a European town twinning project to other citizens: 91.7% selected “Definitely yes” and 8.3% selected “Probably yes”.

Most valued elements of the programme.

Meeting citizens from the other community was selected by **50.0% of respondents** as one of the most valuable aspects of the experience. Visits to local initiatives and businesses and social and informal activities were each selected by **41.7%**. Cultural heritage activities and discussions on rural communities and Europe were each selected by **25.0%**. Multiple selections were permitted, so these percentages are not mutually exclusive.

Overall, the evaluation records positive feedback on the exchange and perceived improvements in several areas addressed by the project. The findings provide an initial basis for monitoring and for refining the second event. The retrospective nature of the comparison remains relevant when interpreting the results: it records perceived change after the experience rather than a comparison between measurements collected independently before and after the event.

Results, European added value and follow-up

The first event established contact between the two Ardara communities through an institutional reception, cultural visits and participation in local community life. It developed the initial connection between two places sharing the same name into a practical opportunity for exchange involving citizens, local representatives and community actors.

The evaluation adds evidence of how the experience was perceived by the respondents. It recorded increased self-reported European belonging, greater familiarity with the other community and greater awareness of the EU's role in supporting local cooperation. The responses also expressed satisfaction with the opportunities for interaction and inclusion, together with interest in future exchanges. These are immediate, self-reported outcomes; the continuity of contacts and longer-term effects remain to be assessed through the subsequent phases of the project.

The European added value of the initiative lies in its transnational and community-based approach. ARDARA² brings together citizens from two rural and geographically peripheral territories, using cultural heritage and local identity as starting points for dialogue, mutual understanding and cooperation. This approach reflects the project's objectives of solidarity, participation, inclusion and the development of lasting institutional and community relationships.

Participant feedback will inform the preparation of the reciprocal event, particularly in relation to opportunities for direct interaction, cultural exchange and shared activities. This follow-up is consistent with the project work plan, which provides for the assessment of initial results and adaptation of the following phase on the basis of lessons learned.

The second and concluding twinning event is planned to take place in **Ardara, Sardinia, in spring 2027**. The precise dates are being finalised with the municipalities and local partners. It will provide the reciprocal opportunity for the Irish participants to meet the Sardinian community and continue the cooperation initiated during the first exchange.

Dissemination and visibility

Communication accompanied the preparation and implementation of the event and continued after the visit. **Go Visit Donegal** and **Donegal Daily** published advance information about the project, its objectives and the planned exchange. These publications introduced ARDARA² to audiences beyond those directly involved in the activities. [Go Visit Donegal](#)

Highland Radio covered the launch of the initiative and included an interview with Seán Cannon-Earley. **Logudoro Live** reported on the institutional encounter, the involvement of young people and the perspectives for cooperation between the two communities. [Highland Radio](#)

Mayor Francesco Dui was interviewed for **Owenea FM**, with the interview shared through the station's social media channel. Focus Europe ETS also shared the interview through its own Facebook page. [Facebook](#)

Focus Europe ETS published a dedicated post-event article and photographic gallery, documenting the institutional reception, cultural activities and significance of the exchange. This material forms part of the project's communication and dissemination record. [Focus Europe](#)

The event agenda identified the project number, the CERV Programme and the European Union's financial support. Public project information also explained the relationship between the local exchange and the project's wider objectives of cooperation, citizen participation and mutual understanding. [Go Visit Donegal](#)

Dissemination links and supporting publications

Focus Europe ETS – Post-event report and photographic gallery

<https://www.focuseurope.org/post/ardara-sardegna-e-donegal-si-incontrano-nel-primo-evento-del-gemellaggio-europeo>

Go Visit Donegal – Report on the reception and activities of the visiting delegation

<https://govisitdonegal.com/latest-news/ardara-welcomed-to-ardara/>

Go Visit Donegal – Project and event announcement

<https://govisitdonegal.com/latest-news/ardara-two-lands-one-european-vision/>

Donegal Daily – Advance coverage of the twinning visit

<https://www.donegaldaily.com/news/ardara-to-twin-with-its-italian-counterpart-this-weekend-644574>

Highland Radio – Launch coverage and interview with Seán Cannon-Earley

<https://highlandradio.com/2026/08/07/when-ardara-meets-sardinia-new-twinning-project-to-get-under-way/>

Logudoro Live – Coverage of the institutional exchange and cooperation prospects

<https://www.logudorolive.it/storico-gemellaggio-tra-le-due-ardara-leuropa-unisce-sardegna-e-irlanda-contro-lo-spopolamento/>

Owenea FM – Interview with Mayor Francesco Dui, “A Tale of Two Towns Named Ardara”

<https://www.facebook.com/OweneaFM/posts/a-tale-of-two-towns-named-ardara-pauric-was-chatting-with-the-mayor-of-ardara-sa/1364942779135633/>

Focus Europe ETS – Social media dissemination of the interview

<https://www.facebook.com/FocusEuropeLab/posts/-ardara%C2%B2-two-lands-one-european-visioncondividiamo-con-piacere-questa-intervista/1487405900088097/>

European Commission – Public project profile

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/projects-details/43251589/101287598>

Ardara.ie – Photographic report of the official welcome and first meeting between the two Ardara communities

<https://ardara.ie/uncategorised/on-7-august-ardara-donegal-ireland-officially-welcomed-a-delegation-from-ardara-sardinia-italy-for-the-first-twinning-event-of-ardara%C2%B2-two-lands-one-european-vision/>

Ardara.ie – Report and photographs of the visits to John Molloy Woollen Mills and Ardara Distillery, followed by participation in the Ardara Show

<https://ardara.ie/uncategorised/as-part-of-the-ardara%C2%B2-twinning-programme-our-visitors-from-ardara-sardinia-enjoyed-tours-of-two-important-local-businesses-john-molloy-woollen-mills-and-the-ardara-distillery/>

Ardara.ie – Pre-event announcement of ARDARA² – Two Lands, One European Vision

<https://ardara.ie/news/ardara%C2%B2-two-lands-one-european-vision/>

Focus Europe ETS – Pre-event project presentation and publication of the event agenda
<https://www.focuseurope.org/post/ardara-sardegna-e-donegal-unite-da-un-progetto-europeo-di-gemellaggio>

Comune di Ardara – Public call for expressions of interest to participate in the twinning exchange
<https://comune.ardara.ss.it/servizi/servizio-dettaglio/3597646>

Focus Europe ETS – Facebook post presenting the first twinning event and the connection between the two communities
<https://www.facebook.com/FocusEuropeLab/posts/due-comunit%C3%A0-con-lo-stesso-nome-radici-rurali-e-un-forte-legame-con-il-proprio-t/1522018576626829/>

Svetlana Sotnikova – Facebook photographic coverage of the official ARDARA² twinning reception
<https://www.facebook.com/sotnikova.artist/posts/it-was-a-pleasure-to-photograph-the-official-ardara%C2%B2-twinning-event-and-capture-/4077018329095904/>

Svetlana Sotnikova – Facebook photographic coverage of the programme, including visits to John Molloy Woollen Mills and Ardara Distillery
<https://www.facebook.com/sotnikova.artist/posts/a-few-moments-i-captured-during-the-ardara%C2%B2-programme-including-visits-to-john-m/4077036695760734/>

Donegal Daily – Facebook dissemination of the article announcing the twinning visit
<https://www.facebook.com/donegaldaily/posts/ardara-to-twin-with-its-italian-counterpart-this-weekend/1455361873301736/>

Instagram – Post dedicated to ARDARA² – Two Lands, One European Vision and the first twinning event in Donegal
<https://www.instagram.com/p/DdYWQPSjCRm/>

Highland Radio – Direct audio link to the interview with Seán Cannon-Earley, accompanying the previously listed launch article
<https://highlandradio.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/ardara-tourism-mix-down.mp3>