



WIRE 2026

Week of Innovative Regions in Europe

2–3 December 2026
The Millenium Theatre,
TUS Moylish Campus,
Limerick, Ireland
wire2026.ie

Future Regions: The Role of Sustainable Innovation in European Competitiveness

PROGRAMME

DAY 1

Wednesday, 2 December

09:00	Registration & Welcome / Refreshments
10:00	Plenary Opening Dr Liam Brown, <i>Vice President Research, Development & Innovation, Technological University of the Shannon (TUS)</i>
10:10	Political Outline – National James Lawless, <i>Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Ireland</i>
10:20	Political Outline EU <i>Video Message from</i> Ekaterina Zaharieva <i>European Commissioner for Startups, Research and Innovation – TBC</i>
10:30	Session 1 Competitiveness & Cohesion: Closing the Regional Innovation Gap
10:35	Opening Keynote / Fireside Chat Potential: Jean-David Malo, <i>Acting Director for ERA and Innovation & Irish Representative</i>
10:45	Panel Discussion 1.1 – Regional Innovation in Practice Moderator: Eva-Maria Szavuj, <i>Head of Unit RTD.A1, European Commission</i> & 4–5 panelists Potential Topics: Potential Topics: Regional Innovation Scoreboard; innovation valleys; R&I ecosystems
11:30	Grab & Go Refreshments
11:50	Breakout Session 1.0 – Practitioner Focused Potential Topics: 1. Technology Infrastructures & Connected Regional Innovation Ecosystems 2. The Role of Cities & Regions in the Next MFF 3. Addressing Regional Innovation Disparities
12:35	Networking Lunch

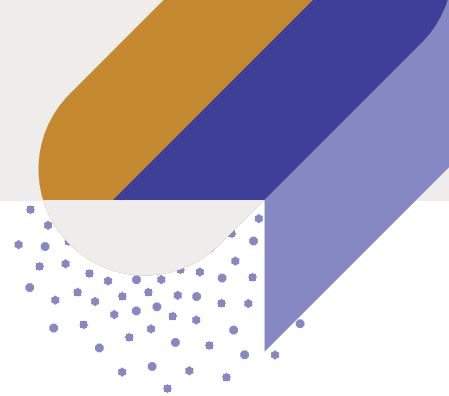
NOTE: This is a working proposal and is subject to change

14:05	Speaker 2 – Breakout Highlights Role: Rapporteur / synthesis speaker Potential Topics: Draw out practical lessons and connect breakout outcomes back to the wider competitiveness and cohesion theme.
14:20	Panel Discussion 1.2 – Future of Regional Funding: FP10 Potential Topics: FP10; interregional cooperation; co-funding challenges; lessons learned from Horizon Europe; regional access to future funding.
15:05	Afternoon Refreshments
15:45	Session 2 People & Skills: Building the Future Innovation Workforce
15:45	Inspirational Keynote 2 – Innovation-Ready Workforce Potential Topics: Innovation literacy, future skills, creativity, science communication, inclusion and building an innovation-ready workforce beyond technical skills.
16:00	Speaker 3 – Scene Setter Potential Topics: ERA Act, Choose Europe, research without borders, talent circulation and European research attractiveness.
16:15	Panel Discussion 2 – People & Skills Potential Topics: Union of Skills; Inclusive Innovation; ERA Act; Choose Europe; regional upskilling; entrepreneurial skills; talent attraction and retention.
17:00	Reflective Closing Address Vincent Cunnane, <i>President, Technological University of the Shannon (TUS) Academia / Host Ireland</i> Potential Topics: Reflections on regional innovation, leadership and the evolution of TUS within Ireland's innovation ecosystem.
17:15	End of Day 1



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DAY 2

Thursday, 3 December

08:30 Registration & Welcome / Refreshments

09:00 **Session 3**
Resilience and Sovereignty

09:00 Welcome & Short Recap of day 1

09:10 **Opening Keynote – Just Transitions**
Potential Topics:
Fair transition in fossil-dependent and rural regions; ensuring fairness does not get lost in the drive for competitiveness.

09:25 **Speaker 5 – Technological Sovereignty**
Potential Topics:
EU resources, resilience and security; technological sovereignty; Chips Act; Cloud and AI Development Act; open source strategy; cybersecurity and procurement resilience.

09:40 **Panel Discussion 3 – Clean Energy, Competitive Regions**
Potential Topics:
Energy transition, affordability and resilience in vulnerable regions; climate action alongside economic growth; peer-to-peer energy; positive energy districts; citizen energy systems.

10:25 Morning Refreshments

11:05 **Breakout Session 2.0**
Potential Topics:
1. Climate Fresh Workshop
Focus: Participatory climate engagement and systems thinking

2. Citizen Energy
Focus: Peer-to-peer energy, positive energy districts and citizen energy systems

3. Climate Neutral & Smart Cities
Focus: Net Zero Acceleration Valleys, smart cities, regional implementation and innovation ecosystems

11:50 **Speaker – Lessons Learned from Breakout Session**
Role: Rapporteur / synthesis speaker
Potential Topics:
Short synthesis of breakout outcomes before moving into the climate panel / wider resilience discussion.

12:05 **Panel Discussion 4 – Climate / Breakout Session Outcome**
Potential Topics:
Climate resilience, implementation, regional transition and how breakout outcomes can inform policy and practice.

12:50 Networking Lunch

14:20 Closing Session

14:20 **Visionary / Unconventional Keynote Speaker**
Potential Topics:
Future Europe, inspiration, innovation imagination, optimism and societal transformation.

14:35 **Interactive Closing Reflection**
Potential Topics:
Audience engagement, shared takeaways, Slido/live polling and creating a strong sense of community before close.

14:50 **Key Takeaways**
Closing Remarks / EU Representative
TBC – Jean-David Malo, *Acting Director for ERA and Innovation, DG RTD, European Commission*
Conversation between a DG RTD representative and the Moderator of the event.

15:00 **Outcome & Closing Ceremony**
TBC – Michael McGrath, *European Commissioner for Democracy, Justice, the Rule of Law and Consumer Protection*
Potential Topics:
Official close, policy reflection and forward-looking message.

15:15 Close