

2026 Meetings of the *Perspectives Rurales* Scientific and Educational Network in Architecture

Call for Papers / Sessions / Posters

Towards new alliances: ecological struggles and territorial projects in contemporary ruralities

Dates: April 27-29, 2026

Meeting location: Maison du Kleebach, Gunsbach (to be confirmed)

On March 1, 2025, a ruling by the Toulouse Administrative Court ordered the immediate suspension of a controversial highway construction project, underscoring the imbalance between the anticipated benefits of the new infrastructure and its environmental cost. That ruling affirmed the legitimacy of an opposition campaign that had taken multiple forms — from legal action to site occupations, festive demonstrations, and the dissemination of counter-proposals.

The struggle against the A69 motorway between Castres and Toulouse exemplifies what many movements have been denouncing for decades: the continuation, and even acceleration, of a development model that, in the medium term, will render the Earth uninhabitable for most living beings, contributing to the transgression of all planetary boundaries that sustain the Earth system. These localized, place-based struggles take a stand against global crises and expand the ways in which we think about ecology.

When rooted in so-called “rural” areas, these movements—often part of a long history of local resistance and struggle—bring to light the deep connections between land use, production methods, food, mobility, and ways of living within territories conceived not as resources to be exploited, but as living environments. In their diversity, contemporary ruralities, as denounced by numerous ecological and social movements in France and abroad, are increasingly subject to a dominant model of development and unsustainable land management. Rarely spared from the effects of metropolitanization, rural areas today – even when framed as “sustainable” – are generally approached through a productive lens centered on development, extraction and exploitation. They often serve as receptacles for predatory agro-industrial practices, commodified natural spaces for leisure and tourism, or dumping grounds for the negative externalities of metropolitan areas.

Continuing older but often invisible struggles, recent mobilizations—against mega-reservoir projects, the privatization of natural spaces for tourist complexes, mining and airport developments, or waste disposal facilities—challenge a utilitarian and functionalist vision of territory in the service of capitalist accumulation. On a global scale, alternative approaches, ranging from institutional initiatives such as nature parks to more insurrectionary forms like Brazil’s Landless Workers’ Movement or the Zapatista communities in Mexico, offer glimpses of other possible futures.

Challenging poor territorial management inevitably disrupts entrenched interests and practices tied to the organization of living environments and spatial planning. These acts of resistance expose the contradictions of a socio-economic system in which they themselves are entangled—just like professionals compelled to act here and now, negotiating, compromising, or standing firm on their convictions and ethical principles. How, then, can we design spaces, transform landscapes, or plan the future of a place when ways of living are being radically re-examined—sometimes through the very struggles that combine local and global issues? What alliances and visions of alternative futures can emerge between ecological struggles and resistance movements, local actors, and spatial planning and design professionals?

The upcoming meetings of the “Perspectives Rurales” scientific and pedagogical network – which brings together professors and researchers from higher education institutions in architecture, agronomy, landscape architecture, and urban planning across France and Europe, along with the Fédération des Parcs naturels régionaux [Federation of Regional Nature Parks] – aim to explore how spatial planning and design practices are being redefined in light of the resistances and struggles transforming contemporary ruralities, through the following five themes:

1. Proposing alternatives: projects and counter-projects. *Prevent or divert? Proceed regardless, but do things differently?*

Practices, knowledge, and methods of design, spatial investigation, representation, and education are mobilized and re-examined in contexts of struggle, local mobilization, or resistance. What roles have these approaches played—and continue to play—in collective mobilizations? How do alternative projects or counter-projects help to articulate and reconcile conflicting interests, contribute to the creation of shared narratives, or, conversely, assert and radicalize positions?

2. Experimenting in the field: acting, building, transforming through mobilization. *Struggle as a territorial laboratory?*

Many mobilizations rely on forms of occupation, which may be more or less permanent. What spatial forms do these occupations take? How do they make broader demands visible? What visions of alternative futures emerge from these occupations, and in what ways? How does resistance fit into a temporality? What ideas about spatial projects emerge from or permeate these occupations?

3. Surviving on the margins: alternative ways of inhabiting places. *Discreet forms of resistance?*

Many forms of resistance can only arise and persist by remaining marginal, operating without directly challenging the dominant logic they oppose. How do these experiences challenge the dominant ecological discourse? Are rural areas, today as in the past, more welcoming to such alternatives than cities? Can these experiments move beyond the aspirations of small groups to form the foundation of broader territorial projects?

4. Connecting: to places and to others in the struggle. *What local and global alliances?*

Struggles often depend on the consolidation of collectives built around negotiated and shared positions. How does emphasizing territorial and spatial stakes help broaden mobilization and bring together residents and actors from diverse backgrounds? How do these movements intersect – today as in the past – with other local and global struggles (feminist, anti-racist, anti-capitalist, decolonial, and beyond)?

5. Learning and teaching from struggles. *What knowledge and learning circulate between activist and academic spheres?*

Struggles – whether discreet or highly visible – mobilize and produce forms of knowledge that are shared and exchanged within activist networks. How is this knowledge transferred to spatial professionals and practitioners? What new perspectives does it open for the evolution of education and training? What kinds of research practices emerge from these encounters?

Submission guidelines

The Perspectives Rurales scientific and pedagogical network meetings aim to bring together a wide range of participants: researchers from various disciplines, as well as local territorial actors and members of civil society. The event will be organized into several thematic sessions.

This call for contributions is open to individuals, institutions, associations, and collectives who share these concerns.

Three types of submissions are invited: **sessions, papers, and posters.**

Session proposals

Proposals should describe the format of the session being proposed, which may take, for example, the following forms:

- roundtable discussion, with suggested invited participants and a proposed theme for debate;
- workshop, aimed at collectively producing, during the session, a text, a manifesto, an agreement, etc., with the participation of specific audiences (students, professionals, experts, activists...) or open to all participants;
- film screening and discussion held during the meetings;
- exhibition with a guided tour;
- tasting session with debate;
- guided site visit;
- walk-and-talk or performative lecture;
- a session for “serious gaming”.

Presentation proposals

Proposals should clearly identify the meeting’s thematic axes to which the presentation relates. Selected contributions will be organized into thematic sessions combining presentation time for speakers and moments of collective discussion.

Poster proposals

It is also possible to propose a scientific poster presenting ongoing or completed research that addresses one or more of the meeting's thematic axes. Dedicated time slots will allow poster authors to discuss their work with conference participants.

Requirements for all proposals

Each proposal must specify the intended format — session, presentation, or poster — and take the form of a text of approximately 2,000 characters (around one A4 page). The proposal should include:

- a title,
- the name(s) of the author(s) or proposer(s),
- and any affiliation with a collective or institution.

Visual materials may also be included.

For Session proposals, the text should additionally specify:

- the facilitators or organizers of the proposed session;
- the expected invited participants;
- the intended audience, including the approximate number of participants;
- a brief background or any other relevant presentation material

(bibliographic references, website, etc.);

- a concise description of the themes and issues addressed;
- any technical or logistical requirements (rooms, equipment, etc.);
- and the duration of the session (two possible formats: 1h30 or 3h00).

For Papers and Posters, the text should indicate:

- the thematic axis or axes of the meeting concerned, and
- how the proposal connects with the broader issues explored in the event.

Proposals must be submitted no later than January 6, 2026, via the dedicated website :

<https://rencontres2026.sciencesconf.org>

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