

# Commission on the Sustainability of Rural Systems (IGU CSRS) Report 2023

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## A. Membership

### A1. Structure of the Current Steering Committee

- Co-Chairpersons
  - Valerià Paül Spain [v.paul.carril@usc.gal](mailto:v.paul.carril@usc.gal)
  - Fiona Haslam McKenzie Australia [fiona.haslam-mckenzie@uwa.edu.au](mailto:fiona.haslam-mckenzie@uwa.edu.au)
- Secretary
  - Aleksandar Lukić Croatia [alukic@geog.pmf.hr](mailto:alukic@geog.pmf.hr)
- Members
  - Suk Kyeong Kang Turkey [ecoksk@gmail.com](mailto:ecoksk@gmail.com) | [skang@ohu.edu.tr](mailto:skang@ohu.edu.tr)
  - Hualou Long China [longhl@igsnr.ac.cn](mailto:longhl@igsnr.ac.cn)
  - William Moseley United States [moseley@macalester.edu](mailto:moseley@macalester.edu)
  - Lou Angeli Ocampo the Philippines [laocampo@up.edu.ph](mailto:laocampo@up.edu.ph)
  - Serge Schmitz Belgium [s.schmitz@uliege.be](mailto:s.schmitz@uliege.be)
  - Cornelia Steinhäuser Germany [cornelia.steinhaeuser@uni-muenster.de](mailto:cornelia.steinhaeuser@uni-muenster.de)
  - Marcin Wojcik Poland [marcin.wojcik@geo.uni.lodz.pl](mailto:marcin.wojcik@geo.uni.lodz.pl)

This steering committee has worked in 2023 with this structure and will continue until late 2024, when the first Co-Chair will step down after finishing his committed four-years term. Aleksandar Lukić will likely become Co-Chair.

### A2. Steering Committee Meetings

Two IGU CSRS Steering Committee (SC) meetings were held in 2023, both in the first half of the year. As dictated by tradition, the main one took place during the annual colloquium of the IGU CSRS (on 5 June in Łódź, Poland), while the other was immediately prior and held virtually on 16 May.

The main purpose of the virtual meeting was discussion about the forthcoming annual colloquium (see section B1). The local organising committee outlined the organisation undertaken. The main discussion was regard the granting of the Anna Firmino Scholarships for Global South PhD students and about the definition of 'Global South'. The decision took account the definition of the standard classification of countries by the United

Nations, in particular the “Note on developed and developing regions” (available at <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/methodology/m49/>).

The participation of the commission in other conferences such as the International Workshop on Geography and Sustainability 2023 to be held in Beijing (China) and the IGU Thematic Conference 2024 to be held in Quito (Ecuador) was also discussed. For the former, Hualou Long committed to attend; for the latter, given the overlap with the annual IGU CSRS Colloquium to be held in 2024 in South America too (see section B2), no IGU CSRS SC member could guarantee their attendance. From the perspective of the IGU CSRS SC it is not possible to guarantee the participation of the IGU CSRS SC members in every single event we are invited to attend. In short, it is difficult to get assistance with travel costs to conferences and, for every individual member, it makes little sense to attend two international conferences every year, plus the national and local conferences, the academic commitments in each university, etc.



With regard to the meeting in Łódź, it was held in the premises of the Collegium Geographicum. Beyond congratulating the local organising committee for the outstanding development of the ongoing conference (see section B1), discussion regarding the first call of the colloquium to be held in 2024 (see section B2), in particular the dates and various logistical, organisational and financial issues, was canvassed. It was decided that the funds of the IGU Commission Excellence Award for 2021 granted in 2022 and finally reimbursed in 2023 will be used for Ana Firmino Scholarships to Global South Rural Geography PhD students, expected to mainly attend from Latin America. It

was decided that no funds will be allocated to a textbook on Rural Geography to be developed in 2024-2025 under the direction of the IGU CSRS Secretary, Aleksandar Lukić (see section D2). Again, new invitations for IGU CSRS SC members to attend in representation of the IGU CSRS were discussed in Łódź (in particular, IGU Land Degradation Commission colloquium to be held in 2024 and the IGU Thematic Conference 2025 to be held in Cairo, Egypt).

The location of conferences after 2025 were also discussed, in particular:

- The 33<sup>rd</sup> (2026) may take place in Italy, given that Europe will not be the location of a conference in 2024 and 2025 and most of the attendants to the IGU CSRS colloquia are European. Giacomo Zanolin (University of Genoa) is happy to explore this possibility. A decision will be made in 2024, during the Argentinian colloquium.
- The 34<sup>th</sup> (2027) may take place in Africa, given the scant presence of our IGU CSRS in this continent (only three colloquia in the history of the commission: South Africa in 2002, Morocco in 2007 and Egypt in 2022), only one in the Sub-Saharan sub-continent. William Moseley (Macalaster College) will try to liaise with Botswanan colleagues. There is no Botswanan corresponding member (see section A3).
- The 35<sup>th</sup> (2028) may take place in Australia, aligning with the IGU general conference to be held there. Taking into account previous experiences of years with IGU general conferences, we decided that in 2028 we will align the meetings to encourage participation at them both, with our IGU CSRS

Colloquium acting as a pre- or post-conference of the IGU general event. This was discussed in 2022 and this is the opinion of the IGU CSRS SC 2022-2024.

The IGU CSRS SC post-2024 will have to make the decisions regarding the locations of the conferences in 2027 and 2028.

### A3. Corresponding Members

The number of corresponding members of the IGU CSRS, as of 13 December, 2023, is 950 in total, from 60 countries. This is calculated by means of the e-mailing list (see section D3).

Country	Number	Country	Number
Afghanistan	2	Japan	115
Argentina	1	Malaysia	1
Australia	29	Mexico	1
Austria	6	Morocco	2
Bangladesh	1	Netherlands	8
Belgium	7	New Zealand	6
Brazil	22	Nigeria	3
Burundi	1	Poland	4
Cameroon	3	Portugal	9
Canada	56	Romania	10
Chile	2	Russia	3
China	18	Saudi Arabia	1
Colombia	1	Serbia	2
Croatia	2	Singapore	1
Czech Republic	7	Slovakia	1
Egypt	6	Slovenia	3
Ecuador	1	South Africa	7
Finland	1	South Korea	24
France	18	Spain	46
Germany	29	Sri Lanka	1
Greece	1	Sudan	1
Guinea	1	Sweden	5
Haiti	1	Syria	2
Hong Kong	1	Taiwan	2
India	153	Thailand	4
Indonesia	1	Turkey	3
Iran	6	United Kingdom	17
Ireland	17	United States of America	248
Israel	5	Vietnam	5
Italy	10	Others	5
Ivory Coast	1	<b>Total</b>	<b>950</b>

### B. Meetings

The annual IGU CSRS Colloquium is the most important activity of the Commission since its inception (originally as a Study Group “Rural Systems”) at the IGU Conference held in Washington in 1992. It represents a unique opportunity for academic collegiality and the interchange of experiences between global rural geographers. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, 2020 was the only year since 1992 that the IGU CSRS annual colloquium has not been held.

Importantly, annual IGU CSRS colloquia always include a three-four-days fieldtrip developed in rural locations to show initiatives, experiences, economic activities, transformations, conflicts, etc., which are understood as living laboratories to explore and arena for in situ academic debates regarding sustainability in rural areas. Typically, colloquia are progressively held in a different continent, each year trying to alternate Global North and Global South.

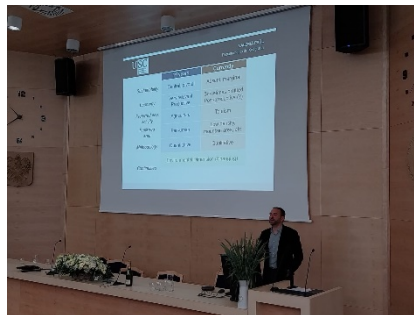
## B1. 30<sup>th</sup> IGU CSRS Colloquium: Poland (2023)

This colloquium, held from 5 to 9 June 2023, was themed *Clashes of Knowledge: “Green Deal” Concepts and Challenges for Sustainable Rural Systems* and organised by the Faculty of Geographical Sciences at the University of Łódź (Poland). The main intention of the colloquium was to consider various opinions and ideas related to rural “green deal” issues such as energy transition, climate change, changes in land use and landscape, transformation of rural functions and changes in lifestyles. The three themes were as follows:

1. Environmental risk and social transformations in rural areas, including issues of migration due to environmental change, conflicts over resources and space, social disparities and quality of life.
2. Rural local communities towards the challenges of the “green deal”, including concerns of social movements and organisations on sustainable development projects and smart growth, local initiatives, perception and image of the rural environment.
3. Transformation of rural cultural landscapes, including issues of the environmental change impact on the rural settlement physiognomy, implications of new green energy investments on rural landscapes and landscape adaptation to environmental change.

Under these themes, there were 22 presentations with more than 50 scholars present from various countries: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, China, Colombia, Croatia, France, Germany, India, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Spain and the United States. After the opening session with the local academic authorities and the Polish Geographical Society, the IGU vice-president and one of the IGU CSRS Co-Chairs, the conference began with three invited keynote addresses:

- a) On the history of the IGU CSRS and the evolution of Rural Studies and Rural Geography (Valerià Paül, Spain), given the 30<sup>th</sup> edition of the history of the Commission.
- b) On rural studies in Polish Geography (Paulina Tobiasz-Lis, Marcin Wójcik, Karolina Dmochowska-Dudek and Patrycja Grzyś, Poland).
- c) On Aboriginal populations’ involvement in managing several Australian national parks (Roy Jones and Tod Jones, Australia).



The presentations were divided into five sessions of four/five presentations. The two PhD students granted Anna Firmino’s Scholarships were from Latin America: Federico José Matías Peralta (Argentina) discussed the possibilities for rural development of a particular plant in the inner province of San Juan and Julián Andrés Grijalba Obando (Colombia) presented on the development of rural marketplaces in Colombia as particular soundscapes generated in this country. In addition, four posters from Polish and Czech scholars were displayed in parallel with the paper sessions in the Conference Hall of the Collegium Geographicum. In one of the two days of paper sessions there was a visit to the city centre of Łódź, focussing on the relevance of the historical manufacturing sector and the subsequent brownfield re-development underpinning the current urban form of the city.

The fieldwork study occurred over three days in the Lodzkie Region. The first day the discussion was about mining and energy production in a power plant, which founded the municipality which is considered the richest community in Poland in terms of GDP per capita, with well-equipped facilities and a wide range of available services, equipment and infrastructures. The sustainability of rural communities impacted by mining was discussed, including long-term future recovery of the mining site for tourism and recreation purposes (i.e. the project of filling the mine with an enormous artificial lake). The second day we visited a place where rural cultural heritage linked to the Corpus Christi celebrations. The reason for meeting in Poland in early June was to enable visiting this Catholic festivity and discussing in situ its implications for rural development of particular events assumed to be heritage and linked to specific places. That day included a visit to a farm producing



organic apple-based juices. Finally, the third day the focus was on natural heritage conservation and its contribution to — and conflicts with — rural development.



## B2. 31<sup>st</sup> IGU CSRS Colloquium: Argentina (2024)

The first circular for the 31<sup>st</sup> IGU CSRS Colloquium to be held in Mendoza (Argentina) from 16 to 20 September 2024 was launched in mid-August 2023. The second call has been launched in early December 2023. Both have been issued in English and Spanish. Under the theme *Contested Rural Spaces*, the call is an invitation to discuss different (contesting) perspectives on developments in rural systems allowing divergences between concepts as “territory” that are used differently in Latin America than in the rest of the world. The conference will be organised by the Department and Institute of Geography of the Universidad Nacional de Cuyo.

The thematic sessions will be organised but not limited to four key sub-themes:

1. Regional productions/ecologies. Agroecology and alternative food networks have recently expanded in the face of the crisis of conventional agriculture. Thus, a diversity of experiences of resistance and transition towards agroecology and food sovereignty has emerged. To what extent do these alternatives challenge the primacy of mainstream agribusiness? What role does agroecology play in international policies and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?
2. Rural-urban disputes. The boundaries between cities and rural spaces have been transformed. New uses and activities in cities as well as processes of rural gentrification emerge. In addition, new and old land users lead to territorial tensions and disputes. The post-pandemic also implied a revalorisation of rural spaces. Youth and neo-ruralities linked to migration, tourism and the use of new technologies are challenging classical understandings of “the rural”.
3. Socio-environmental inequalities and environmental conflicts. As a result of increased pressure on natural resource extraction, there has been an increase in socio-environmental inequalities and territorial conflict. Processes of soil, water and forest degradation and pollution, including desertification, are coupled with changes in rural labour. To what extent can new case studies provide not only critiques of the existing reality but also prefigure more sustainable alternatives?
4. Land ownership, tenure and planning. After a certain academic impasse in attention to the “land question”, interest in processes of land appropriation, use and management has returned. Issues related to transhumance, natural protected areas, the subdivision of properties and the territorial demands of indigenous peoples are just some of the topics on the current agenda. In addition, policy responses to land and territorial planning, management and development, incorporating renewed perspectives of participation, gender and environment, also deserve to be analysed.

The field work is expected to happen by exploring the southern part of the province of Mendoza, including visits to the Uco Valley and Malargüe.

Abstracts are due to be submitted by March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024 by <https://forms.office.com/e/RRrOQiARLJ>

For any requirement please contact the organising committee at [31Colloquium-IGU-CSRS@ffyl.uncu.edu.ar](mailto:31Colloquium-IGU-CSRS@ffyl.uncu.edu.ar)

### B3. Participation in the IGU Conference in Dublin (2024)

The call for abstracts for the 35<sup>th</sup> Geographical Congress to be held in Dublin (Ireland) from 24 to 30 August 2024 closes on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2024. Papers must be submitted to sessions associated with IGU Commissions. The IGU CSRS will host the following sessions:

1. Arboriculture and pastoralism: New territorial complementarities?
2. Industry sustainability and multifunctionality in the countryside.
3. More-than-human agencies in sustainable rural tourism.
4. Réintégrer de l'agriculture et l'alimentation dans les villes : nouveaux modèles, métiers, compétences.
5. Rural areas in a post-Covid-19 era.
6. Rural citizenship and civil society.
7. Three decades of rural geography around the world: Where are we in 2024?

Sessions 2 and 5 were submitted by the CSRS Co-Chairs Fiona Haslam McKenzie and Valerià Paül to facilitate the participation of rural geographers from all around the world.

All the information regarding this worldwide conference is available at <https://igc2024dublin.org/>

### C. Networking

The IGU CSRS collaborates with other IGU commissions and related international, intergovernmental or inter- and multi-disciplinary groups. These include:

- Since 2019, IGU CSRS corresponding members from Poland are part of the DESIRA (*Digitisation: Economic and Social Impacts in Rural Areas*) initiative, a EU H2020 Project coordinated by the University of Pisa (Italy) on improving the capacity of society and of political bodies to respond to the challenges that digitisation generates in rural areas, agriculture and forestry in the next years (<https://desira2020.eu/>). The project has been granted for the period 2019-2023.
- In early 2020 a EU H2020 RISE project on sustainable development in mountain areas was granted (<https://www.highlands3.eu/>) for the period 2020-2023, extended to 2025 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In this project, IGU CSRS corresponding members from different Argentinian, Austrian, French, Romanian and Spanish universities cooperate. In early 2023 a month research period of this project was held around Mendoza (Argentina), which has been used an opportunity to test how the 31<sup>st</sup> IGU CSRS Colloquium to be held in 2024 will take place (see section B2). In September 2023 another month session period of this project was held in the Romanian Carpathians and a paper directed by Valentina Stoica (Romania), co-authored with rural scientists from Algeria, Argentina, Austria, France, Romania, Slovenia, Spain and Vietnam, on comparative relevant case-studies of mountain sustainable development initiatives, has been drafted and will be submitted soon for peer-reviewing.
- Valerià Paül (Spain), Editor-in-Chief of the Catalan Society of Geography journal so-called *Treballs de la Societat Catalana de Geografia*, invited Roy Jones (Australia) to submit a manuscript on rural change in Western Australia and other places to this journal, which, after peer-reviewing, was accepted and published in June 2023 at <https://revistes.iec.cat/index.php/TSCG/article/view/150574> ("Objectivity, Subjectivity and Contextuality: Approaches to the Study of Rural Change in Western Australia and Elsewhere"). Also, Scott W. Hoefle (Brazil) submitted a paper on the indigenous perception of selected Brazilian wilderness areas to this journal, which, after peer-reviewing, has been accepted and published in December 2023 at <https://revistes.iec.cat/index.php/TSCG/article/view/150818> ("Spirits in the Wood: A Relational Socio-Ecology of the Brazilian 'Wilds'").
- Lou Angeli Ocampo (the Philippines) and Serge Schmitz (Belgium) have published together in February 2023: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1745-5871.12565> ("Accumulation by Dispossession and Hazardscape Production in Post-Corporate Gold Mining in Itogon, Philippines").
- Rubén Boga, Valerià Paül (Spain) and Fiona Haslam McKenzie (Australia) published together in April 2023: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/soru.12415> ("Padrón Peppers or Peppers from Herbón? Discussing the Controversial Attainment of a Geographical Indication in Light of Food (Re)Localisation Approaches").



- George Secareanu (Romania) is developing in the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester of 2023 a post-doctoral research period at the University of Santiago de Compostela (Spain) comparing wine production in the Romanian and Galician countryside.
- Serge Schmitz (Belgium) is an editorial member of the journal *Geography and Sustainability*, an initiative largely supported by the IGU: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/geography-and-sustainability>
- Holly Barcus (United States) and Valerià Paül (Spain) wrote an obituary to Salah Eisa (Egypt), given his unfortunate loss in September 2023, available at <https://igu-online.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Prof.-Salah-Eisa.pdf> and <https://igu-online.org/obituary-prof-dr-salah-abdel-gaber-ghonim-eisa-1951-2023/>
- Helena Pina (Portugal) organised in Porto in May 2023 the annual seminar on issues in European space, its 17<sup>th</sup> edition. This is a yearly opportunity to discuss the changing geography of Europe. IGU CSRS members such as Ana Maria Bicalho and Scott Hoefle (Brazil), Aleksandar Lukić (Croatia), Mary Cawley (Ireland) and Suk Kyeong Kang (Turkey), plus many Portuguese colleagues, presented their research on several Rural Geography topics in their respective countries. The abstracts are available at <https://repositorio-aberto.up.pt/bitstream/10216/149869/2/626965.pdf>



## D. Publications and Dissemination

Academic dissemination has been a central purpose of the IGU CSRS since its origins. Most of the early colloquia developed conference proceeding books which took considerable time to publish after the respective colloquia. Further, in many countries a proceedings book is not considered a legitimate scientific publication. For these reasons, in recent conferences it was decided that the outcomes of the presentations held in the colloquia would be published in peer-reviewed conference proceedings and peer-reviewed papers in ranked scientific journals (commonly, by means of a special issue). A weakness of the latter is that they appear after the event and depend on the *ex post* submission of papers and the reviewing timing of the respective journal.

All these publication systems have been intensively discussed in recent years by the IGU CSRS SC. Hence, the current publications reflect different choices made between the IGU CSRS SC and the respective local Organising Committee of the colloquia that are annually held.

### D1. Publications Derived from Previous Colloquia Appeared in 2023 or in Process of Edition

- From the 27<sup>th</sup> IGU CSRS Colloquium held in 2019, in 2023 a third publication has appeared (after the two publications in 2022 explained in the previous annual report of this IGU CSRS): the book entitled *Sustaining Rural Systems: Rural Vitality in an Era of Globalization and Economic Nationalism*, edited Holly Barcus and William Moseley (United States), available at <https://www.routledge.com/Sustaining-Rural-Systems-Rural-Vitality-in-an-Era-of-Globalization-and-Barcus-Moseley/p/book/9781032443713>. The book contains seven chapters from authors of eight countries, plus the introduction.
- From the 28<sup>th</sup> IGU CSRS Colloquium held virtually in 2021 (fieldwork was developed in 2022), a special issue of *Hrvatski geografski glasnik* (Croatian Geographical Bulletin in Croatian), available at <https://hrcak.srce.hr/broj/22334> (vol. 84, no. 2), has been themed "Rural on the Move: Transitions,

Transformations, Mobilities and Resistance”. This special issue was dated the 31<sup>st</sup> December of 2022, thus it was not included in the previous report of this IGU CSRS. The special issue contains six papers from authors of six countries presented at the colloquium and was edited by Aleksandar Lukić (Croatia).

- From the 29<sup>th</sup> IGU CSRS Colloquium held in 2022, a special issue of the historical *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie d'Égypte* (*Bulletin of the Society of Geography of Egypt* in French), available at [https://bsge.journals.ekb.eg/issue\\_39551\\_40009.html](https://bsge.journals.ekb.eg/issue_39551_40009.html) (vol. 95, issue 2), has been themed “The Egyptian Contributions to Rural Geography Studies”. This special issue appeared in early 2023, thus it was not included in the previous report of this IGU CSRS. The special issue contains six papers presented at the colloquium (five from Egypt and one from Spain) presented at the colloquium and was edited by Salah Eisa (Egypt), who authored the introductory section and the annexes of the issue.
- From the 30<sup>th</sup> IGU CSRS Colloquium held in 2023, a special issue of *Czasopismo Geograficzne* (*Geographical Journal* in Polish) is expected in 2024. This journal is one of the most important Polish geographical journals, published since year 1923, and it is indexed in Scopus and many other relevant indexes. From five to ten papers of the 22 presentations held in Łódź (see section B1) are expected to be published after the reception of submissions of manuscripts and the double-blind peer-reviewing.

The IGU CSRS Co-Chairs kindly encourage the editors of these publications to send hard copies of these texts, if they do exist, to the IGU Archive in Leipzig (Archiv für Geographie, Leibniz-Institut für Länderkunde/Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography).

## D2. Rural Geography Textbook

As reported in section A2, a textbook on Rural Geography produced by the IGU CSRS has been discussed. Aleksandar Lukić (Croatia) has been appointed by the IGU CSRS SC as editor of this book with a deadline for 2025.

There are no multi-authored textbooks on Rural Geography embracing the main Rural Geography themes with authors from several countries and different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The structure will consist of 10-12 chapters, every chapter with a global reading list necessarily covering English and non-English references to embrace relevant citations at an international scale, considering both the Global South and the Global North. The book chapters will be co-authored.

## D3. Digital Networking

Website <https://igu-csrs.github.io>

In mid-2020, we set up a new website of the IGU CSRS. In 2021 it was updated, including a section on previous publications from the Commission and another on previous reports from the IGU CSRS SC available at <https://igu-csrs.github.io/reports.html>. Currently, there is a need to update this website (see section F).

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/ruralgeography/>

This social network is constantly updated by Suk Kyeong Kang (Turkey).

E-mail list [igu-csrs@okayama-u.ac.jp](mailto:igu-csrs@okayama-u.ac.jp)

This e-mail list is maintained from Okayama University. The e-mails are filtered by Doo-Chul Kim (Japan).

## F. Accountability

Part of the IGU funds received for 2020 and 2021 are earmarked for updating the IGU CSRS website up to 2024. In early 2024 this will be done, with the corresponding payment for 2023 (still pending) and 2024.

The IGU funds received for 2023, plus the IGU Commission Excellence Award 2021 granted in April 2022, have been transferred to the University of Santiago de Compostela. In cooperation with the local organising committee, some funds have already been partially spent on the Ana Firmino Scholarships for two Latin American PhD students attending the 30<sup>th</sup> IGU CSRS Colloquium held in Poland, covering the fees, the accommodation and the travel costs (see section B1). PhD students from Ukraine were specifically earmarked for granting Ana Firmino Scholarships, but no abstract submissions from Ukraine were received.



For 2024, the available funds at the University of Santiago de Compostela from the previous years, plus the IGU funds received for 2024, will be entirely devoted to cover Ana Firmino Scholarships, potentially including travel costs, for PhD students attending the 31<sup>st</sup> IGU CSRS Colloquium to be held in Argentina, in cooperation with the local organising committee, and depending on the abstracts effectively submitted in due time to be presented in the event (see sections A2 and B2).

Submitted by



Valerià Paül



Fiona Haslam McKenzie

Santiago de Compostela and Perth, 29 December, 2023