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EAGER - Easing Agrophotovoltaics for Europe

Newsletter № 11

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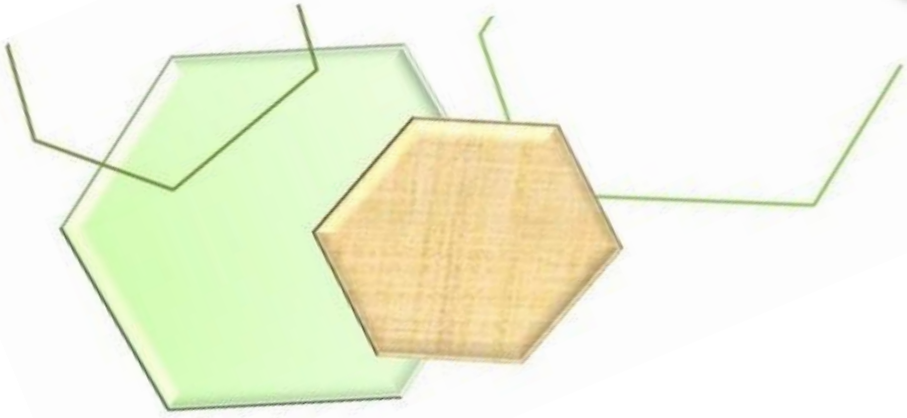
Contents:



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What is EAGER

The EAGER project is a European project funded by the INTERREG Europe Programme that facilitates the adoption of agro-photovoltaic systems across partner regions. By fostering a shared understanding of this technology, identifying best practices, and enhancing policy instruments, this project is paving the way for a greener future.

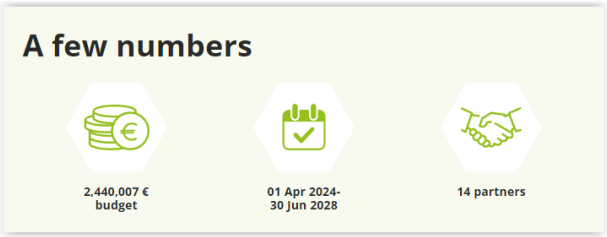
The expansion of renewable energies aims at meeting the energy demand of the EU while replacing fossil fuels, but it requires large areas of land. At the same time, food security is threatened by the impacts of climate change and a growing world population. **Agrophotovoltaics (APV) can mitigate the conflicting interests between agriculture and open space photovoltaic systems** for viable land, as it allows to produce energy and food at the same time in the same place through a combination of farming and solar generation with a total **land use efficiency of up to 186%.** This is why the EAGER project aims at improving policies **to ease APV in Europe.** It will enable the definition and set-up of favourable policy framework conditions for implementing APV as a praxis-oriented concept for achieving Greener Europe.

In the following pages, you will find interesting materials describing the overall context and objectives of the project as well as information on the latest developments and current events.

We shall keep you informed about our progress and key outcomes through the project website, thematic events, and newsletters.

Project at a glance

By generating a common understanding of APV concept and contexts, identifying, analysing, and transferring good practices, changing behaviour among policy actors of the participating regions towards supporting and expanding APV in their regions, **9 policy instruments** will be improved by 2027. The 14 partners and 3 associated policy responsible authorities are committed to high-quality and efficient exchange of experience and policy improvement, acknowledging that the topic of APV is multi-layered and complex. It considers the policy fields of energy, agriculture, spatial development, and land use, with impacts on economic development, and has the potential to contribute to sustainability and energy security. Its novelty in the regions encourages out of the box thinking and an innovative interpretation of good practices in the broadest sense.



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Study visit in Germany under the EAGER project

On the 22nd and 23rd of April, project partners and stakeholders from across Europe gathered in Ruhstorf an der Rott, Germany, for a two-day Study visit organised within the frame of the EAGER project (Easing AGrophotovoltaics for EuRope). The event brought together regional stakeholders, such as local authorities' representatives, experts in agri-photovoltaics (APV) regulation, farmers, renewable energy businesses representatives to exchange knowledge and strengthen cooperation on APV.

Date: 22-23rd April 2026
Location: Ruhstorf an der Rott, Germany

The event opened with a public session, in which participants were welcomed by representatives of the project Lead Partner - Technologiezentrum Energie of HAW Landshut (TZE), the Municipality of Ruhstorf an der Rott and the District President of Lower Bavaria. The event highlighted the growing role of APV in supporting sustainable land use, renewable energy generation and rural development.

Participants reviewed the EAGER project progress and its objectives, followed by a dedicated session on APV regulation and guidelines in Bavaria. A panel discussion then explored different perspectives on APV implementation, featuring contributions from the farmers' association, municipalities, regional utility companies and local farmers.

The afternoon session focused on interregional cooperation within the project consortium, including updates from partners, key activities for the Semester 5 and the launch of the predefined co-coaching partnerships among project partners. These activities reinforced the project's mission to assist policy learning and improvement.

On the second day, participants joined several technical study visits showcasing innovative renewable energy solutions in the region.

The first visit was to the Hydroelectric power station Jochenstein, which is a run-of-river hydropower station on the Danube at the border of Germany and Austria. This plant works by

using the natural flow of the Danube River. Water is directed through turbines inside the dam, and the force of the moving water spins those turbines, which drive generators to produce electricity. The facility was developed in response to the region's unique landscape and local conditions. A potential project currently under development was also introduced: a hydraulic pumping facility designed to utilize surplus solar and hydropower generated nearby. The system would pump water to a higher elevation and use it as an energy storage medium.

The facility is planned to be built near Jochenstein, and its storage capacity is expected to be sufficient to supply all residents of Passau with electricity for up to one week.

The second site was the Energy Museum: Haus am Strom. This is an environmental and energy experience centre located beside the Jochenstein Power Plant in the Danube Valley, combining interactive exhibitions on water, sustainability, biodiversity and renewable energy. Visitors can explore hands-on displays, regional nature topics and learn how hydropower generation works in the nearby plant.

In the afternoon, partners visited the State-owned Farm in Grub (Staatsgut Grub), which is part of the Bayerische Staatsgüter (Bavarian state-own farm) and serves as a research and demonstration site for innovative agriculture and renewable energy systems near Munich, Germany. At the site, a large Agri-PV test facility showcases three different systems in combination with wheat cultivation: elevated Agri-PV, allowing farming machinery to work beneath panels; linear tracking Agri-PV, where panels follow the sun to improve output; and vertical Agri-PV, using upright panel rows that reduce land sealing and generate electricity in the morning and afternoon. These three facilities specifically investigate crop yields in response to the Bavarian APV installation policy, which requires that at least 85% of the agricultural land remains in use and that a minimum of 66% of the original agricultural yield is maintained. Besides, the farm also is also been used for researching biodiversity, microclimate effects, and the practical integration of solar energy with agriculture.

The event provided valuable insights into how regions can combine agriculture and clean energy while preserving productive land. It also strengthened collaboration among EAGER partners as they continue working towards more supportive frameworks for Agri-PV across Europe.

NEWS FROM SERBIA

Fourth Stakeholders' Meeting of the Project EAGER in Serbia

On 26 March 2026, the fourth stakeholder meeting within the EAGER project was held in the Republic of Serbia, hosted by the Municipality of Bačka Palanka as an online event. The meeting brought together representatives of the Municipality of Bač, the Regional Development Agency Bačka, the BioSense Institute, and the Society for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Sources.

Date: 26th March 2026
Location: Online

Their participation is expected to contribute to the Municipality of Bačka Palanka's Development Plan for 2022–2028 improvements, particularly in the field of agrivoltaics, through the combination of complementary areas of expertise. In this regard, agricultural development knowledge and understanding of rural needs will help ensure that planned measures are better aligned with local conditions and practical realities of implementation. At the same time, experience in public policy development and implementation at the regional level will support the strengthening of strategic planning and improve overall policy coherence within the document.

In parallel, expertise in the application of innovations and new technologies in agriculture will contribute to the introduction of more modern and data-informed approaches to agrivoltaics development. Finally, proven knowledge and experience in energy efficiency and renewable energy will further support the technical soundness and feasibility of the proposed energy-related measures.

Taken together, findings and conclusions gathered from the participants within the meeting will support the Municipality of Bačka Palanka in revising the Development Plan 2022–2028, ensuring that it remains realistic, applicable, and firmly grounded in local development priorities and capacities.

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NEWS FROM POLAND

Fourth Stakeholders' Meeting of the EAGER Project in Poland

On March 19, 2026, the 4th Regional Stakeholder Group Meeting of the "EAGER" project was held at the headquarters of the Rzeszow Regional Development Agency. As part of an exchange of experiences and knowledge, RRDA hosted stakeholders from institutions such as the Marshal's Office of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship in Rzeszów, the Podkarpackie Agricultural Advisory Center, the Ignacy Łukasiewicz Rzeszów University of Technology/Ignacy Łukasiewicz Institute of Energy Policy, the Local Action Group Association "EUROGALICJA," and the FREDROPOL Energy Cooperative.

Date: 19th March 2026
Location: Rzeszow, Poland

During the meeting, best practices observed during the study visit to Belgium on October 5 and 6, 2025, were presented and discussed, along with their potential application in our region. Further planned activities were discussed, as well as the dates and locations of future study visits.

During the meeting, a project titled "BiodIvErSe - Accelerating Multifunctional Innovative Photovoltaic Energy Systems through Biodiversity Sensitive Assessment" implemented under the Interreg Europe program, was presented. The speaker was Michał Banak from the Marshal's Office of the Mazovia Voivodeship in Warsaw. The main objective of the project is to support institutions developing solar energy and nature conservation authorities by providing tools and guidelines to improve decision-making and the implementation of regulations related to the development of photovoltaics.

During the discussion, participants addressed the challenges associated with the

development of APV, identifying possible directions for action, sharing experiences from ongoing initiatives, and considering potential regulatory changes in this area.

NEWS FROM ITALY

APV: sustainable integration between energy and agricultural production in Italy

Date: 27th March 2026
Location: Imola, Italy

The fourth stakeholders' meeting was organised in Imola in March 2026 in collaboration with the IIS Scarabelli-Ghini (agricultural institute - high school) in Imola, involving students, teachers, local authorities and private sector representatives.

The meeting was hosted directly within the school and involved students and teachers of the agricultural institute, creating an opportunity to discuss agrivoltaics with young people in training and with professionals active in agricultural education.

The initiative focused on presenting the EAGER project and opening a discussion on the relationship between agriculture, renewable energy and innovation, with particular attention to the potential of APVs systems and their possible applications in the local context.

The school setting made the meeting especially valuable, as it connected the project's European

exchange activities with local education and vocational training. Students had the opportunity to learn more about current developments in APV, the interaction between photovoltaic systems and agricultural production, and the broader challenges linked to energy transition in rural areas.

Teachers also contributed to the discussion by sharing perspectives connected to agricultural training, land use and innovation in the farming sector.

The event represented an important dissemination and stakeholder engagement activity for NCI, strengthening dialogue between the EAGER project and the local educational community, while raising awareness among younger generations about APV and sustainable rural development.

NEWS FROM LITHUANIA

Lithuania Leads Europe's Rapid Shift to Renewable Energy

Lithuania has become one of the European Union's fastest-growing renewable energy leaders, rapidly reducing its reliance on fossil fuels and Russian energy imports. Renewable electricity generation increased from 15% five years ago to about 50% in 2025, mainly due to major investments in solar and wind power.

The country experienced significant growth in renewable infrastructure. The number of households and businesses producing their own electricity rose from under 19,000 in 2021 to over 174,000 in 2025. Solar power capacity expanded from 225 MW to more than 3,280 MW, while wind power capacity grew from 623 MW to over 2,535 MW, enough to power around 1.5 million homes annually.

Lithuania was recognised at the European Parliament for having the EU's fastest renewable electricity transition over the past four years and for achieving "independence from Russian fossil fuels". In April 2025, solar and wind energy covered 84% of the country's electricity demand.

The government aims for 100% of Lithuania's electricity consumption to come from renewable sources by 2028, with long-term plans to export green electricity to other European countries. Officials say recent energy crises and rising fossil fuel prices accelerated the country's transition, turning challenges into opportunities for sustainable growth and energy security.

Source of the report: HERE

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GOOD PRACTICES

Fixed Rates to subsidize solar power plants in CAP farm investment projects

The Lithuanian agricultural sector faces challenges related to rising energy prices and the effects of climate change. Traditional energy sources in rural areas are not only expensive, but also reduce sustainability. Many farmers have faced difficulties in installing solar power plants due to high installation costs and limited financing options. Therefore, a practice has been introduced whereby farmers who invest in solar power plants under their CAP farm investment projects get the subsidy based on the fixed rates per kW. Fixed rate is one of the instruments of Simplified Cost Options (SCO), promoted by European Commission. If SCO instrument is used, no commercial offers, invoices, public procurement documents and etc. are needed to be submitted with the subsidy claim. The administrative burden is reduced and fixed rates can be and are higher, than regular (co-financing) subsidy rates, also, each year there are adjustment based on market situation and technological achievements. They cover all the main stages of installing a solar power plant: from design to installation. This ensures that farmers receive fair support that is in line with market prices, thereby reducing the risk of errors in project financing and increasing the transparency of project implementation.

Fixed rates help farmers to estimate the possible costs of the project more easily and follow simple procedures of financing.

The practice achieved significant results. More than 1,000 solar power plants in agriculture have been installed in Lithuania, the total capacity of which exceeded 80 MW. This made it possible to reduce farmers' energy costs, and the share of renewable energy in agriculture increased to 17% (according to the data of the Ministry of the Environment of Lithuania). After implementing this practice, farmers saved more than 5 million. EUR per year for energy bills alone.

This practice can be useful for other EU countries that seek to promote renewable energy sources in agriculture. Lithuania has successfully shared this experience with Latvia and Estonia, which have started to apply similar financing mechanisms and fixed rates, adapting to their local markets and climate conditions. The most successful aspects are clear funding parameters, strong cooperation with consultants and technical support for farmers, as well as flexibility to adapt to market changes.

Benefits of agriphotovoltaics use and regulation presented in the agricultural school

In Serbia is insufficient knowledge about the use and benefits of agriphotovoltaics. This is especially in underdeveloped parts like the municipality of Bac which lies in the west-north region of Vojvodina next to the Croatian border making it very isolated.

That was the reason for organizing a conference within the agricultural school of Bac to get acquainted with the new technology of agriphotovoltaics and best practice of it in EU countries. The school is the place where the farmers, the parents of the pupils gather. The experts from EAGER project and other stakeholders were invited to present their knowledge about APVs to professors and the audience: pupils, farmers, and people from the energy sector, as well as decision-makers from the local community. The goals of the conference were education, training, and raising awareness about the importance of regulation for APVs.

This is a good practice because it was in the rural area where is important to keep people and they could hear the opportunity to be besides farmers also energy provider.

The interest was very big, many pupils were present, also famers, decision-makers, people from the energy sector. We had many questions and they offered land for a pilot project and asked for the next conference with training.

This is a very good practice for other region why we promote the benefits of APVs to pupils who are young and should use them soon. Also, parents are farmers and they like to come to the school and especially to be involved in school activities. This was a good place for promotion and result to make a pilot project and demand for the next conference were good results and signs that the APVs will be adopted in their practices.

EAGER Partnerships and Communication Channels

The project includes a well-balanced mixture of partners coming from several main sectors: public authorities (local, regional and national), research institutions, regional development agencies, agriculture representatives, NGOs and energy agencies. Together we represent varied views across a range of stakeholders and interests providing competent knowledge and experience in the field of energy efficiency, renewable energy sources and policy design. The partnership is characterized by a strong transnational character, covering nine nations within the Interreg Europe Program area, thus ensuring a good geographical and cultural coverage and relevant attention to the issues and needs of a wide range of institutional settings and establishments from European Countries.

University of Applied Sciences Landshut (TZE) - **Lead partner**, Germany	TZ ENERGIE	https://www.haw-landshut.de
Public Institution Lithuanian Innovation Centre (LIC), Lithuana	LIC LITHUANIAN INNOVATION CENTRE	https://www.lic.lt
Rzeszow Regional Development Agency (RARR), Poland	RARR RZESZOWSKA AGENCJA ROZWOJU REGIONALNEGO	https://rarr.rzeszow.pl
Agricultural and Agrifood Technological Center (ITAGRA), Spain	itagra.ct CENTRO TECNOLÓGICO AGRARIO Y AGROALIMENTARIO	https://www.itagra.com
Palencia Provincial Council (PALENCIA), Spain	Diputación DE PALENCIA	https://www.diputaciondepalencia.es
National Paying Agency under the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania (NPA), Lithuania	NPA NATIONAL PAYING AGENCY	https://nma.lrv.lt

Nuovo Circondario Imolese (NCI), Italy	NUOVO CIRCONDARIO IMOLESE	https://www.nuovocircondarioimolese.it
Regional Energy Agency of Pazardjik (REAP), Bulgaria	REGIONAL ENERGY AGENCY - PAZARDJIK	https://reap-bg.eu
Municipality of Strelcha (STRELCHA), Bulgaria	СТРЕЛЧА	https://strelcha.bg
Catholic University of Leuven (KU Leuven), Belgium	KU LEUVEN	https://www.kuleuven.be
Municipality of Ruhstorf an der Rott (RUHSTORF), Germany		https://www.ruhstorf.de
Provincial Development Agency (POM) Flemish Brabant, Belgium	POM VLAAMS-BRABANT	https://pomvlaamsbrabant.be
Municipality of Bačka Palanka (MBP), Serbia		https://backapalanka.rs
Institution "Zakarpattia Regional Development Agency" (ZRDA), Ukraine	ZAKARPATTIA REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY	https://zakarpattia.agency

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EDITORIAL

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