EAGER - Easing Agrophotovoltaics for Europe

Newsletter № 8

November 2025

Contents:

EAGER helps policymakers in promoting agrophotovoltaics to foster harmony between agriculture and open-space solar systems.

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.

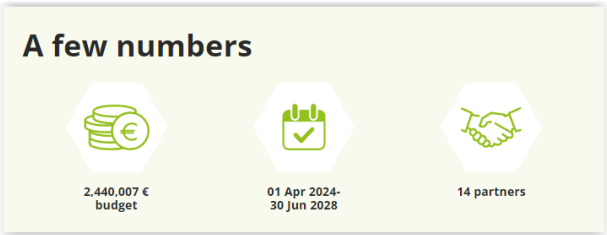
The expansion of renewable energies aims at meeting the energy demand of the EU while replacing fossil fuels, but it requires large areas of land. At the same time, food security is threatened by the impacts of climate change and a growing world population. **Agrophotovoltaics (APV) can mitigate the 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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EAGER STUDY VISIT IN BELGIUM

Study Visit to Leuven, Belgium, within the frame of the EAGER Project

On November 5th and 6th, 2025, a Study visit was organised in Leuven, Belgium, within the frame of the EAGER project: "Easing AGrophotovoltaics for EuRope". The Provincial Development Agency (POM) Flemish Brabant, in collaboration with the Catholic University of Leuven (KU Leuven), hosted this two-day event, bringing together regional partners, policymakers, and experts from across Europe to exchange experiences, identify best practices, and strengthen policy instruments supporting agrivoltaics systems.

Date: 5th – 6th November 2025
Location: Leuven, Belgium

The event opened with welcoming remarks by Gunther Coppens, Deputy of the Province of Flemish Brabant for Spatial Planning and Chair of POM, setting the stage for two days of knowledge exchange on advancing agrivoltaics solutions.

During the first day, Belgium partners and stakeholders presented inspiring examples of how agriculture and renewable energy can go hand in hand, showcasing good practices that demonstrate the dual benefits of electricity generation and food production (Jan Cappelle, Professor, Electrical Energy Systems and Applications (ELECTA), KU Leuven) and how energy communities in agriculture can be set up (Fien Van Esch, Consultant Energy, Boerenbond). The discussions also focused on improving policy instruments, exploring industrial business cases (Brecht Willockx, Associate Strategic Development, Storm), and presenting real-life experiences from the implementation of agrivoltaics systems in Hoogstraten, Belgium.

The first working day concluded with strategic planning discussions to define the next steps of the project and ensure the continued exchange of knowledge among partner regions.

The second day was dedicated to on-site study visits, offering participants a first-hand look at how agrivoltaics systems are being applied in practice from a research and policy perspective

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— from integrating solar panels into fruit cultivation to exploring pioneering research on renewable energy and smart grid technologies.

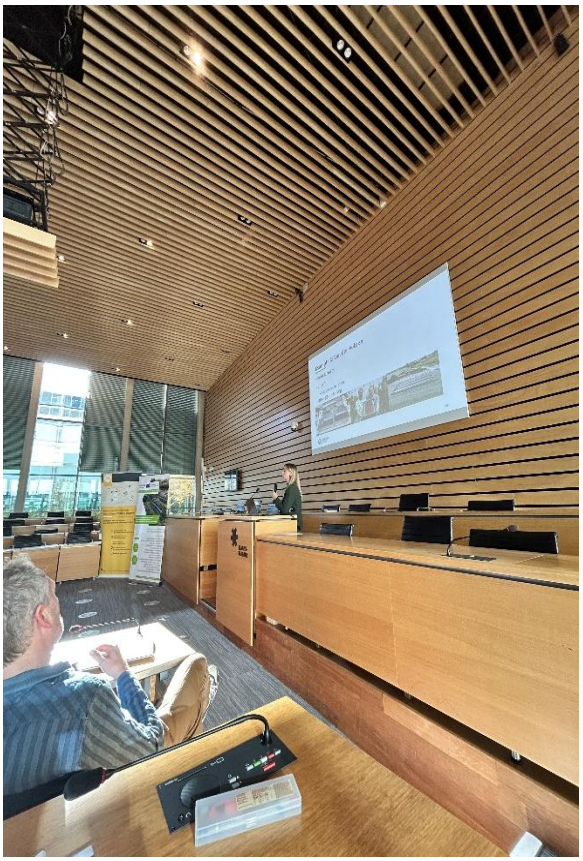
The first visit that was showcased was the TRANSfarm – a project that facilitates scientific research on a pilot scale in the broad research domains of the sustainable bioeconomy and translational biomedical research. Their agrivoltaics pilot site is designed to investigate and demonstrate technology tailored for high-intensity farming systems. The setup features a tall structure with increased steal use but delivers flexibility and higher energy output. Moreover, hydrogen solar panels are integrated into the agrivoltaics installation.

Another exciting visit was the one to Vandervelpen - a farm specialising in sustainable fruit cultivation. In their agrivoltaics system, pears grow in a protected environment with reduced solar irradiance, a modified microclimate, and a potential physical cover protecting against hail damage.

The next visit was PCfruit - it covers applied scientific research, demonstration activities to fruit growers, co-development programs with various kinds of industries and services for fruit growers. PC Fruit very recently developed a new test site for agrivoltaics in collaboration with KU Leuven and Boerenbond to evaluate how different types of solar panels affect the growth and production of raspberries.

The event concluded with a visit to EnergyVille. This is a collaboration between the Belgian research partners KU Leuven, VITO, imec and UHasselt in the fields of sustainable energy and intelligent energy systems. Their activities are clustered in eight interdisciplinary domains: solar energy, battery storage, power electronics, power-to-molecules, thermal systems, electrical networks, energy for buildings and districts, energy strategies and markets.

The study visit not only strengthened collaboration between European regions but also showcased how agrivoltaics innovations can drive both environmental and economic sustainability.



NEWS FROM LITHUANIA

24th Conference of Baltic States and Polish Paying Agencies

On 24–26 September 2025, the National Paying Agency of Lithuania hosted the 24th Conference of Baltic States and Polish Paying Agencies in Vilnius, bringing together representatives from Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Poland to discuss how innovation and technology are transforming the implementation of the 2023–2027 Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plans. Under the headline "Innovation and Technologies – the Driving Force for the 2023–2027 CAP Strategic Plan", participants exchanged experience on modern support administration tools, digital monitoring solutions and smart technologies used to improve the efficiency, transparency and quality of payments.

Date: 24th – 25th September 2025
Location: Vilnius, Lithuania

The conference showcased practical examples of using advanced IT systems, satellite data and artificial intelligence to monitor farming activities, assess compliance and support evidence-based decision-making. Presentations highlighted national and international initiatives that strengthen data sharing, automation and risk analysis in paying agency operations, including new generations of monitoring platforms, AI-based image classification and digital interfaces for beneficiaries. These innovations help reduce the administrative burden on farmers, ensure more accurate controls and contribute to climate-smart and sustainable agricultural development.

In addition to technical discussions, the event provided a platform to reinforce regional cooperation. Participants discussed the challenges related to the closure of the 2014–2020 programming period, shared lessons

learned, and explored joint approaches to future CAP implementation. During a presentation on NPA's international project activities by Deputy Director Tomas Orlickas, the Interreg Europe project EAGER was presented, which aims at easing APV in the partner regions by generating a common understanding of suitable APV settings and contexts, identifying, analysing and transferring good practices, and ultimately improving 7 policy instruments, also aligning policy and innovation efforts with sustainable CAP implementation.

That supports rural development and strengthens trust in EU agricultural support systems.

Development of Solar Power Plants in Lithuania: Seeking a Sustainable Balance Between Energy and Agriculture

On October 8th, 2025, the agenda of the Committee on Rural Affairs of the parliament of the Republic of Lithuania included a discussion on the development of solar power parks on agricultural land. Representatives from the Ministries of Energy, Environment, and Agriculture, as well as from the Young Farmers and Youth Union and agricultural self-government organisations, participated and shared their views and concerns.

In Lithuania, discussions about the expansion of solar power plants—particularly their construction on fertile agricultural land—are becoming increasingly active. Representatives of both the energy sector and the farming community agree that it is essential to find a sustainable compromise between the development of renewable energy and the continuity of agricultural activities.

Date: 08th October 2025
Location: Online

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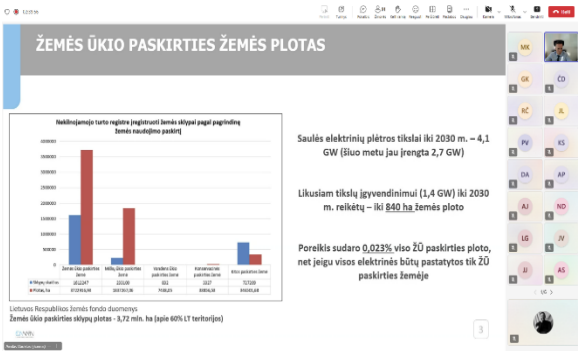
Deputy Minister of Energy Airidas Daukšas emphasised that the expansion of solar power plants is inevitable in achieving the country's goals of energy independence and climate change mitigation. However, he noted that the scale of development must be rational. It is estimated that even if all solar power plants were built solely on agricultural land, they would occupy less than one-hundredth of a percent of all arable land. Therefore, the key priority is to ensure clear regulation and transparent planning so that land use remains balanced.



There is no shortage of positive examples— in some regions of the country, such as Joniškis District and Kuršėnai, solar power plants coexist with agricultural activities. Vegetables are grown, or livestock are grazed under the panels, creating a dual benefit for both farmers and the energy sector. These projects demonstrate that renewable energy and agriculture can be compatible if development is carried out responsibly and innovatively.

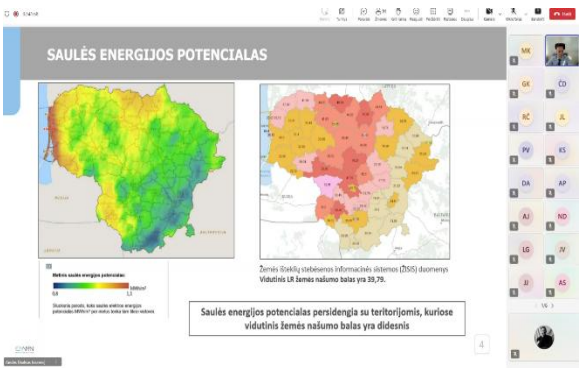
Nevertheless, some farmers and their representatives highlight growing challenges. One of the main issues is the lack of clear regulation and the potential loss of fertile land. In some cases, solar parks are built on former farmland, raising concerns about the continuity of food production and regional agricultural development. Farmers also stress the need for clear rules that encourage smaller, farmer-owned solar projects rather than the expansion of large commercial parks. These issues are increasingly being raised in public discussions and regional meetings.

During the Rural Affairs Committee discussion, Deputy Director of the National Paying Agency (NMA) Tomas Orlickas shared his insights. He presented the international project EAGER, in which the NMA participates. The project's goal is to share best practices from European countries on how to align solar power development with the use of agricultural land.

According to Orlickas, it is crucial to distinguish between two different phenomena—solar power systems installed by farmers themselves and large-scale commercial solar parks. In the first case, farmers often achieve positive results: reduced soil erosion, more efficient land use, and the possibility to engage in mixed activities. Meanwhile, large solar parks pose risks, as their development often occurs without direct farmer involvement and can displace traditional agricultural practices from the most fertile areas.

Orlickas also pointed out the issue of insufficient data—currently, there is no clear information in Lithuania on how many solar power plants operate, where they are located, what type of land they occupy, and whether they belong to farmers or commercial developers. He noted that entering accurate data into the Agricultural Data Centre systems would enable more informed decisions regarding development limits and the allocation of support.

"To plan sustainably, we must first know where and what types of solar power plants operate in Lithuania. Only then can we avoid conflicts between energy and agricultural interests," Orlickas emphasised.



This discussion and the NMA's participation in the EAGER project reflect a shared goal—to align energy progress with agricultural sustainability through facts, data, and responsible planning.

European Commission official at NMA: a model for innovative checks and administration

On 10 November 2025, a delegation from the European Commission led by DG AGRI Director Oliver Sitar visited the National Paying Agency (NMA) in Vilnius to learn first-hand about the agency's key processes and principles of project control and administration. The guests were particularly interested in NMA's experience and the advanced remote-checking tools the agency has built and continually improves. Director Sitar underlined that NMA's solutions—especially satellite-enabled optimisation of control work—are exemplary for EU institutions working in the agricultural sector, and encouraged continued dialogue with the Commission. The visit formed part of a broader fact-finding mission to Lithuania's agricultural sector with a view to ensuring a strong, fair CAP framework for the 2028–2034 financial perspective.

Date: 10th November 2025
Location: Vilnius, Lithuania

During his briefing on NMA's international cooperation and project portfolio, Deputy Director Tomas Orlickas also referenced ongoing Interreg Europe project EAGER, whose goal is to lower barriers to agrivoltaics (APV) across partner regions by establishing shared criteria for suitable APV models, identifying and exchanging proven practices, and converting these insights into upgrades of seven policy instruments—thereby aligning regulation and innovation with a sustainable CAP, strengthening rural development, and reinforcing trust in EU agricultural support systems.

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NEWS FROM GERMANY

EAGER & ILE Dialogue forum

Date: 20th November 2025
Location: Ruhstorf an der Rott, Germany

On the 20th of November 2025, during the seventh stakeholders meeting, an EAGER & ILE Dialogue forum was organised in Ruhstorf an der Rott, Germany.

The event began with a welcome speech by the Mayor of the Municipality of Ruhstorf, who emphasised the importance of Agri-PV in achieving the region's renewable energy goals.

Following this introduction, two APV experts from the Bavarian Landscape Energy Department delivered a comprehensive presentation on Agri-PV. The presentation covered key topics, including the definition of APV, the legal framework and compensation rules under the German Renewable Energy Sources Act, technical guidelines (DIN SPEC 91434), and regional study sites in Grub, Bavaria. Field studies in Germany indicate that crops such as berries, fruit, and fruiting vegetables are more suitable for APV systems than crops like corn and wheat. The findings also highlight that high light transparency (60–80%) and lower shading levels support better crop growth under APV installations.

TZE then broadened the discussion to the European level, presenting best practices observed during study visits to regional farmers and energy companies. The audience showed particular interest in how APV can protect crop production against climate change and in the potential to use existing solar parks to cultivate regionally suitable crops, inspired by a good practice example from Spain (FUNGISOLAR).

Despite these opportunities, many farmers expressed concerns regarding the financial schemes associated with APV deployment. They also highlighted uncertainties about implementation without additional support from government authorities and investors, including regional energy companies.

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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