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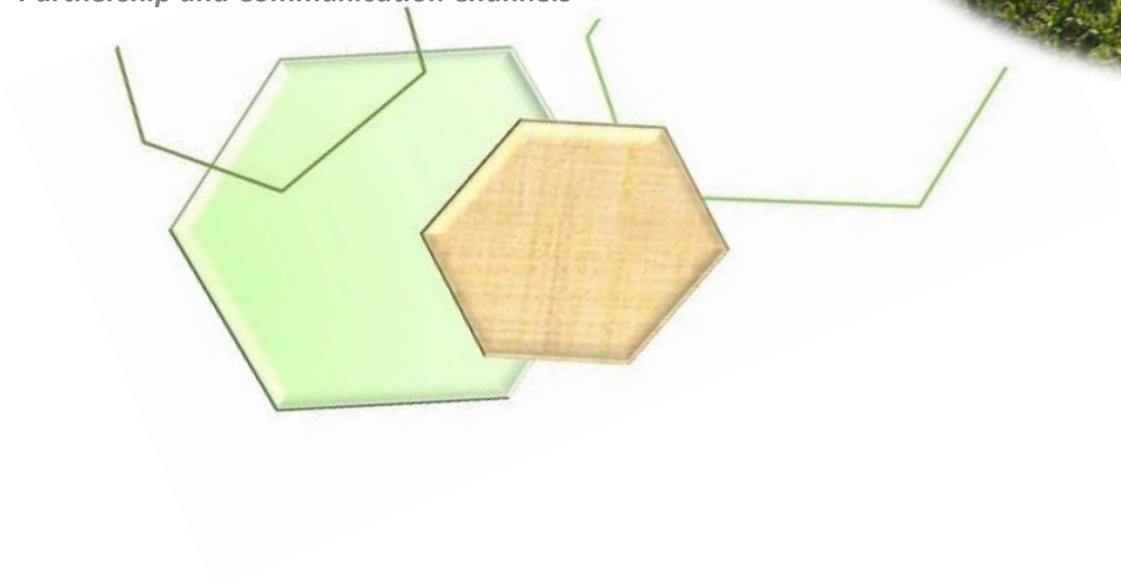
EAGER - Easing Agrophotovoltaics for Europe

Newsletter № 4

March 2025

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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 on 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.

A few numbers



2,440,007 €
budget



01 Apr 2024-
30 Jun 2028



14 partners

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EAGER Study visit in Spain

On the 26th and 27th of February 2025, a study visit within the framework of the [EAGER project – “Easing AGrophotovoltaics for EuRope”](#), co-funded by the Interreg Europe Programme 2021-2027, took place in Palencia, Spain. The host of the event was the [Palencia Provincial Council](#) and the [Agricultural and Agri-Food Technology Centre \(ITAGRA\)](#).



Date: 26th and 27th February 2025

Location: Region of Castilla y León, Spain

EAGER partners and stakeholders from the participating regions became familiar with agrophotovoltaics (APV) good practices from the rural region of Castilla y León, as well as APV policies and initiatives at national and regional level from Spain. This initiative aims to highlight the benefits and opportunities of APV and its potential to become a new tool for development and greater sustainability in the agri-food sector.

On the first working day, the event, which also included the attendance of the general public, started with a welcome speech by the president of the Palencia Provincial Council. It was showcased the development of the agricultural and renewable energy sectors in the different regions in Spain. Various energy communities and stakeholders involved in the event addressed the topics of APV project financing, intelligent agrivoltaic systems, and renewable energy sources. A review of EAGER project as well as existing Spanish policies at national and regional level to stimulate the larger deployment of APV was done.

This was followed by a roundtable dialogue with prominent guest speakers from different Spanish authorities and institutions where barriers and potential solutions in the Spanish context of agricultural development and APV systems deployment have been discussed. Many questions from the public were resolved by the experts in this session.

On the first day of the event, partners had also a Steering committee meeting to discuss the progress of EAGER project and to define next steps and events to be implemented within the project.

On the second day, ITAGRA organized several on-site visits to demonstrate innovative solutions and best practices in the area of APV. The first example was a model presented in Fungisolar-Iberdrola (Revilla Vallejera, Spain) that combines at the same time production of crops like mushrooms, and energy production. The Spanish stakeholder Iberdrola presented innovative initiatives to recover the soil of a solar panel plant by growing mushrooms with

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the help of using the shade of the solar panels. At that location, partners and stakeholders got familiar with another two interesting initiatives: Project Wine Solar and Project APV Basaldea. The Wine Solar project results contribute to potential water savings of 30%, increase in soil moisture by 14%, decrease in soil temperature by 12%, decrease in ambient temperature during peak hours between 2°C and 5°C, and decrease in wind speed due to panel barrier by 28%. The main outcomes from the APV Basaldea project are: an elevated structure 4 m over apple trees, usable surface loss of only 1%, ground projection of 38.84%, and use of control surfaces.

Another interesting initiative that was showcased is the CIFP San Gabriel, an APV with a tracker system over a vineyard (Aranda, Spain) installed by Powerfultree, this is a research unit that cultivates vineyard, calculates how much is the generation of energy and checks the soil moisture depending on the different position of the shadow from the photovoltaics. The shade also helps winemakers avoid excess solar radiation, allowing them to cultivate better grapes for wine. This construction reduces the vineyard area by only 5%, which leads to a great benefit from electricity generation.

The last location was a wine cellar: Pradorey (Aranda, Spain), this is a wine production farm where since more than 20 years the owners installed a solar garden for self-consumption, nowadays they also have photovoltaics panels on its roof to help produce hot water, setting an example of a circular economy.

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NEWS FROM GERMANY

EAGER Third Stakeholders Group Meeting in Germany

The third stakeholder meeting for the Interreg Europe Project EAGER was held at Technologie-Zentrum Energie, bringing together diverse stakeholders to discuss key developments and challenges in agrivoltaics (APV) in Germany. Project background information and recent progress, including identified Good Practices, were presented to the stakeholders.

Representatives from Siemens Technoparks, Bauernverband Niederbayern, ILE an Rott & Inn, and Bayerische Landesanstalt für Landwirtschaft showed strong interest in the project. They contributed valuable insights and new perspectives, particularly regarding local conditions and future opportunities.



Date: 18th February 2025

Location: Ruhstorf an der Rott, Germany

In the meeting, the following points were raised and discussed regarding the integration of APV systems:



1. Field robotics and autonomous farming

The the potential of autonomous, energy-efficient robots for field management was discussed during the meeting. This brings in a possible future research question: how can agrivoltaics support the development of autonomous, energy-efficient agricultural technologies?

2. Combining 4%-area set-aside with energy production

With the GLÖZ-8 standard requiring at least 4% of arable land to be set aside (though suspended for 2024), stakeholders examined ways to repurpose these areas for renewable energy generation.

3. Global relevance of APV

APV is a growing topic of global significance, addressing the increasing demand for renewable energy while maintaining agricultural productivity. Japan serves as a prime example, with 6,000 to 7,000 APV installations on small plots of land. The critical question remains: what constitutes energy production, and what qualifies as agriculture? This distinction is vital for developing appropriate policies.

4. Decentralized energy production and the dual-use of agricultural land

APV allows for a dual-purpose use of this land, generating renewable energy while continuing agricultural activities. As decentralized energy production becomes more important, a key challenge is determining where the energy is

generated. In some cases, agricultural land may be the most profitable and practical location for energy generation.

5. Farmer support and diversification

Participants emphasized that farmers should have a second source of income to reduce financial risk. APV could serve as this "second pillar" by providing an additional revenue stream through renewable energy production.

6. Challenges of grid connection and storage

The grid connection remains a significant hurdle for APV, along with the issue of energy storage. While farmers could cover much of their own energy needs through APV, surplus energy storage and the ability to feed it into the grid are critical challenges that need to be addressed.

7. Landscape integration of APV

The visual impact of APV systems on the rural landscape remains a concern. Integrating these systems in a way that harmonizes with the existing landscape is important for public acceptance and environmental protection.

8. Systematic thinking and regional approaches

From the demand side, it is important to adopt a systematic approach to APV implementation. Regionalwerke (regional energy companies) could play a key role and serve as a good practice for interregional learning.

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provided valuable insights into APV’s potential and challenges, highlighting the importance of collaboration to drive sustainable energy solutions in agriculture.

NEWS FROM LITHUANIA

9. APV: Potential for rapid growth

Second Stakeholder Meeting in Lithuania of the EAGER project

APV could quickly spread across Europe if primary questions about grid integration, legal frameworks, and landscape management are resolved. Once these key issues are addressed, APV has the potential to become a widespread solution.

On February 7th, 2025, the National Paying Agency hosted an online joint workshop with an objective to identify and outline the importance of solar energy and educate about all the advantages it brings also present on-going projects like EAGER, The BEATLES and BIOSOLFarm to farmers without PV.

10. New law on privileged status for APV

Recent legal developments in Germany now allow APV projects to receive privileged status (Privilegierung) under Section 35 of the Baugesetzbuch (BauGB). This means that APV projects can be approved more easily in agricultural areas, as long as the land is used for both energy production and ongoing agricultural activity. The Agricultural Office plays a crucial role in determining this privileged status, which simplifies the approval process for APV installations.



11. Existing guidelines for PV installations

The Municipality of Ruhstorf an der Rott has already established a set of criteria for evaluating the visibility of open-field PV installations on agricultural land.

Date: 7th February 2025

Location: Lithuania

The meeting generated genuine interest among stakeholders, and the discussion

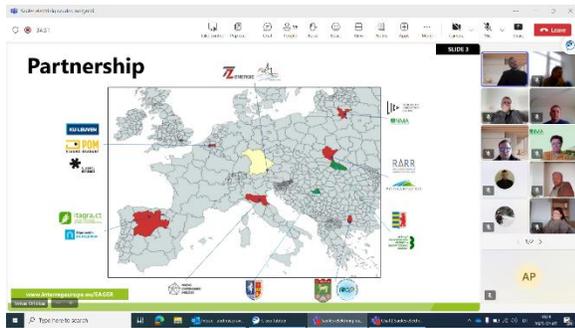
The joint workshop began with an introduction to its objectives, the importance of solar energy integration into agriculture and setting the stage for the discussions that followed.

The seminar continued with an in-depth look at the EAGER project and all benefits that comes during the period, which aims at improving policies to ease APV in Europe and

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supports solar energy development in agriculture, and a review of its application in Lithuania. NPA presented the challenges and limitations with possibilities and solutions that already has been already identified after regional study.



The BEATLES project aims to transform the current agriculture and food system and accelerate the systematic transition to climate-smart agriculture and smart agriculture technologies. It was introduced, providing participants with an understanding of ongoing European efforts in this area.

A brief questionnaire was distributed to farmers to gather baseline information on their knowledge of solar energy technologies.

A short segment followed with insights from the BIOSOLFarm project, highlighting key survey findings regarding farmers' attitudes towards solar energy.

Two local farmers then shared their personal experiences with solar energy implementation, discussing challenges, benefits, and outcomes.

A roundtable discussion allowed all participants to engage in a dialogue on the various opportunities and challenges they face in the adoption of solar energy systems,

fostering an exchange of ideas and experiences.

The final set of questionnaires was completed to evaluate the immediate impact of the seminar and to assess any shifts in participants' understanding of solar power technologies.

Conclusion

This seminar provided a comprehensive introduction to the potential of solar energy for the agricultural sector. Through informative presentations and interactive discussions, participants gained insights into the benefits and challenges of integrating solar energy into their operations. The follow-up assessment will provide further clarity on the effectiveness of the seminar in fostering real, long-term change within the farming community.

Follow-Up and Future Impact Assessment

In a few months, the same farmers will be invited to a follow-up session, where they will complete another round of questionnaires to determine whether the seminar had a sustained impact on their knowledge and practices regarding solar power. This follow-up is crucial for understanding the long-term benefits and challenges of solar energy adoption in the farming sector

Purpose of the Questionnaire

The primary objective of the questionnaire was to assess the level of information retained by participants before and after the presentation on solar power systems. The feedback will be

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used to gauge the effectiveness of the presentation and determine whether it provided valuable insights into the implementation of solar energy in agricultural settings. A follow-up session with the same participants will take place in a few months to observe whether the knowledge acquired has been applied and if the presentation had a lasting impact.

NEWS FROM ITALY

White Paper on Agrophotovoltaics in Italy

The Nuovo Circondario Imolese, partner of the EAGER project, attended the event held on February 17 in Bologna for the presentation of the white paper titled *Opportunities and Challenges of Agrophotovoltaics in Emilia-Romagna*.



Date: 17th February 2025

Location: Emilia-Romagna Region, Italy

The paper was drafted by *Clust-ER Greentech*, an association that operates at the regional level through an open innovation approach in the fields of energy and sustainable development.

This document stems from a shared process developed within Clust-ER Greentech, aiming to identify both the potential and the challenges in the development of agrivoltaic systems. It consists of a summary of recommendations designed to support all those who are or intend to be involved in various capacities in the implementation and management of agrivoltaic systems, including private entities, associations, businesses, and local authorities.

The event was also attended by representatives of the Emilia-Romagna Region, who emphasized how agrivoltaics is a strategic element in achieving regional renewable energy production targets (an additional 4.8 GW of energy to be generated by 2030). A key factor in completing the regulatory framework will be the new regional law, which will define the "suitable areas" for the construction of photovoltaic plants.

NEWS FROM SPAIN

Second Stakeholders meeting in Palencia, Spain

On March 28, 2025, the Second Spanish Stakeholders Meeting of the [EAGER project](#) took place at the Palace of the Provincial Council of Palencia, Spain. The event was organized by ITAGRA CT and the Palencia Provincial Council, both partners in the [EAGER project](#), co-funded by the Interreg Europe Programme 2021-2027.

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Date: 28th March 2025

Location: Palencia, Spain

The meeting was held in a hybrid format, with 10 participants attending in person and 3 joining online. It brought together representatives from various sectors involved in the field of Agrivoltaics, including the agricultural sector (APAPAM) and the energy sector (Enerdisa and Cylsolar). A startup specializing in agrivoltaic projects (Powerfultree) also participated, along with public administration representatives, such as the mayor of La Serna and technical staff from the Provincial Council of Palencia. The academic sector was also represented by members of a Vocational Training Center (Instituto Alonso Berruguete), a PhD student, and a professor from the University of Valladolid.

During the meeting, the new stakeholders were introduced to the [EAGER project](#) by a member of the Itagra team, who provided an overview of the project's details, objectives, methodology, and the progress achieved in its first year.

Key activities discussed included the most relevant findings from the Regional Study on the Province of Palencia, study visits to Vilnius, Lithuania, and Palencia, Spain, as well as the identification of good practices across the different regions. The discussion also addressed the Policy Instrument, which is the "Agenda Rural of Palencia," a local strategy aligned with the 2030 Agenda goals. This strategy incorporates green energy initiatives and provides a framework for developing agrivoltaics projects.

Finally, stakeholders had the opportunity to ask questions about APV, leading to an engaging and insightful discussion.

NEWS FROM POLAND

Second Stakeholders meeting in Rzeszów, Poland

On 21st March 2025, the second Stakeholder Meeting of the project "EAGER- Easing AGrophotovoltaics for EuRoPe" took place. As part of the exchange of experience and knowledge, RRDA S.A. hosted stakeholders from institutions such as Podkarpackie Renewable Energy Cluster, Municipal Services Department in Kuryłówka, Marshal's Office of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship in Rzeszów, Podkarpackie Agricultural Advisory Center and Local Action Group Association "EUROGALICJA".

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Date: 21th March 2025

Location: Rzeszów, Poland

The project objectives, its main goals and planned further activities were presented. In addition, good practices from the study visit in Spain were presented and discussed along with dates and locations for future visits. Good practices identified in Poland as well as in Europe were also presented.

The concept of implementing a photovoltaic installation on an orchard farm located in the Podkarpackie region was presented. The idea of using agrophotovoltaics in orcharding was presented by Mr Andrzej Boratyn from the Podkarpackie Agricultural Advisory Centre in Boguchwała.

The meeting was a space for discussing agrophotovoltaics and the challenges of implementing it in the region. Experiences of ongoing projects in the region were shared and the benefits for agrophotovoltaics of creating energy cooperatives were considered. As a result of the discussion, important new issues needing to be addressed were defined.

Agricultural school in the function of agrophotovoltaics - APVs promotion

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 the 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. EAGER project was presented, definition of APVs was explained together with the best practices in countries that are partners in the project.

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Date: 21th March 2025

Location: Municipality of Bac, region Vojvodina, Republic of Serbia

Schools can help in promoting new technologies as agriphotovoltaics and regulations for them as was done through the conference in agricultural school in Bac.

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. They posed 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 regions because it was a promotion of 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.

GOOD PRACTICES

Development of apiaries and flower meadows in the area of photovoltaic farms

Polenergia implements the Environmental and Social Policy, the main objective of which is sustainable development as the foundation for wise business management. The practice aims to develop the Sulechów I Project's photovoltaic farm sites for agrophotovoltaics. The solar power plant consists of eight photovoltaic installations, with a total capacity of 8 MW. The photovoltaic farm occupies just half of the entire 16-hectare-plus Sulechów I development.



Therefore, the decision was made to return the undeveloped land to nature and create flower meadows in the area of the farms and establish an apiary consisting of 10 beehives. Each bee colony consists of as many as 50,000 bees, which collect nectar and pollen from created flower meadows and other honey-producing plants found in the area. The farms not only run apiaries, but also support other insect species. Mounds made of stones and clay create an excellent place for the development of bumblebees and other ground

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insects. In addition, insect houses are set up on the farms to provide a place for other pollinating insects to develop. Through this land use, we are generating energy from renewable energy and contributing to biodiversity in the areas surrounding the PV farms. Honey harvested from the apiaries is used for employee use and is an example of real action to support biodiversity.

Farm modernization - in the area of green energy on the farm

Photovoltaic installations are ideal to combine it with the simultaneous use of the land for crop production or animal grazing. Including the purchase of energy storage and smart energy management systems in the investment has allowed beneficiaries to increase the use of the electricity they produce on the farm.



The program was an element of the country's development policy system and its Managing

Authority was the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. It aimed to support rural development by enhancing agricultural competitiveness, sustainable resource management, climate action, and territorial development. The program consisted of assistance to farmers granted in the form of a subsidy for eligible costs incurred for the implementation of a given investment. The level of subsidy was 50% of the eligible costs incurred or 60% if a “young farmer” applies for assistance. The program was open to any person whose: the size of the farm was at least 1ha of agricultural land or a property used for agricultural production; carried out agricultural activities for profit in animal or plant production which excluded fish farming and scientific research purposes. The investments covered by this operation were: the installation of solar power generation equipment on the farm and on developed agricultural land; the installation of heat pumps combined with photovoltaic installation and electricity flow management systems; subsidies for the purchase of electricity storage facilities.

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Partnership 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



<https://www.haw-landshut.de>

Public Institution Lithuanian
Innovation Centre (LIC),
Lithuania



<https://www.lic.lt>

Rzeszow Regional Development
Agency (RARR), Poland



<https://rarr.rzeszow.pl>

Agricultural and Agrifood
Technological Center (ITAGRA),
Spain



<https://www.itagra.com>

Palencia Provincial Council
(PALENCIA), Spain



<https://www.diputaciondepalencia.es>

National Paying Agency under
the Ministry of Agriculture of
the Republic of Lithuania (NPA),
Lithuania



<https://nma.lrv.lt>

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Nuovo Circondario Imolese
(NCI), Italy



<https://www.nuovocircondarioimolese.it>

Regional Energy Agency of
Pazardjik (REAP), Bulgaria



<https://reap-bg.eu>

Municipality of Strelcha
(STRELCHA), Bulgaria



<https://strelcha.bg>

Catholic University of Leuven
(KU Leuven), Belgium



<https://www.kuleuven.be>

Municipality of Ruhstorf an der
Rott (RUHSTORF), Germany



<https://www.ruhstorf.de>

Provincial Development Agency
(POM) Flemish Brabant, Belgium



<https://pomvlaamsbrabant.be>

Municipality of Bačka Palanka
(MBP), Serbia



<https://backapalanka.rs>

Institution "Zakarpattia Regional
Development Agency" (ZRDA),
Ukraine



<https://zakarpattia.agency>

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