

AE4EU

Press Release – For immediate release

Largest Mapping of Agroecology in Europe to Date Expands to 33 Countries, Reveals Growing Momentum — and Structural Gaps

- **Brussels, 23 February 2026** — A major new report, *Mapping the Development of Agroecology in Europe – Volume 3*, published by ISARA and Agroecology Europe, provides the most comprehensive picture yet of how agroecology is evolving across the continent.
- With the addition of nine new countries — Belgium, Czech Republic, Latvia, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland, Serbia, Slovakia and Switzerland — the mapping now covers **33 European countries**, offering an unprecedented cross-country overview of agroecology as a **science, a set of practices, a social movement, and a policy-relevant transition framework**.
- At a time when European agriculture faces mounting demands in relation to climate change, biodiversity collapse, farmer livelihoods, and food security, the report delivers timely evidence of where agroecology is taking root and offering solutions — and where systemic barriers remain.

A European Knowledge Infrastructure in the Making

This third volume builds on two previous editions (2023 and 2024), creating a cumulative European knowledge base on agroecology's development trajectory. The mapping was carried out under the Horizon 2020 **Agroecology for Europe (AE4EU)** project and supported by EU LIFE funding in several countries. Together, the three volumes represent the most extensive documentation effort of agroecology's European landscape to date.

Relevance for EU Policy Debates

As discussions intensify around the future of the CAP post-2027, climate adaptation in agriculture, biodiversity restoration targets, rural demographic decline, and food security and resilience amid geopolitical instability, this mapping provides concrete evidence that **agroecology is already operational in diverse European contexts**. The report shows that agroecology can contribute simultaneously to:

- Climate mitigation and adaptation
- Biodiversity regeneration
- Farmer income stability
- Rural revitalisation
- Short supply chains and territorial food systems

However, scaling agroecology requires moving beyond pilot projects toward its structural integration in agricultural, trade, land and competition policies.

Why This Report Matters Now

Agroecology is gaining wider recognition, including through the European Partnership on Agroecology Living Labs and Research Infrastructures, but despite increasing visibility, the term is still often misunderstood. This new volume demonstrates that:

- Agroecology is no longer marginal — it is present in **universities, farmer networks, research infrastructures, social movements, living labs and public policy debates**.
- It is continuing to evolve beyond technical farming practices toward **transformative approaches that address power, land access, food sovereignty and rural equity**.
- Different interpretations of agroecology persist between regions and institutions, and a confusion with “green” intensification or narrow sustainability approaches risks diluting the systemic ambition of agroecology.

A Unique Methodology Across Europe

The report is based on:

- **Hundreds of interviews** with key informants including farmers, researchers, civil servants, NGOs and movement leaders.
- A common European framework distinguishing five activity categories: **Practice, Science, Social Movement, Living Labs, and Education & Training**.
- Systematic documentation of initiatives using social, environmental, economic and governance criteria.
- Cross-country comparison enabling analysis of structural patterns and policy implications.

This structured mapping approach makes the report a practical tool for policymakers assessing how agroecology can be integrated into future **Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)** frameworks, research funding, and rural development strategies.

Key Findings Across the Nine Newly Mapped Countries

1. Agroecology Is Growing — But Not Evenly

Development varies widely depending on:

- Regional political structures (e.g., federal systems such as Belgium)
- Agronomic conditions
- Strength of farmer unions and civil society
- Research ecosystem maturity
- Government engagement with Living Labs

2. Living Labs Are Emerging as Policy Bridges

In countries such as Belgium and Norway, agroecology living labs are increasingly recognised as platforms connecting farmers, researchers and policymakers. However, their development remains regionally uneven and often project-dependent.

3. Education Is Expanding, Institutionalisation Lags

Dedicated Master's programmes and university courses are expanding, but agroecology remains insufficiently integrated into mainstream agricultural education in many countries.

4. Social Movements Are Central

Farmer unions, peasant organisations and citizen networks play a decisive role in advancing agroecology — particularly where public policy support is limited. In some contexts, agroecology is explicitly framed as a **food sovereignty and structural transformation project**, not merely a technical adjustment.

5. Structural Barriers Persist

Across countries, common challenges to the uptake of agroecology include:

- Land concentration and access barriers
- Market power of large retailers and agri-corporations
- Policy incoherence
- Narrow interpretations of sustainability
- Insufficient research funding aligned with agroecological principles

Quote:

“This mapping clearly shows that agroecology is not an abstract concept but a reality across Europe, lived in farms, research institutions, education programmes and citizen-led initiatives. While policy frameworks and funding still do not consistently reflect this momentum, stakeholders across 33 countries are already building the foundations of more resilient and sustainable food systems.”

- Agroecology Europe Research Manager Vincent Dauby.

About the Report

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