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WELCOME

Finally, the long-awaited Spring, which brings the hope of a close harvest and results of our work, has come. Soon the Community of Practice on Agroecology in Europe and Central Asia will meet live in the beautiful surroundings of Bursa, Turkey. We hope the meeting will bring great fruit for [agroecology schools](#) and organisations of small producers. Until then, let us actively use the [Bilim.network](#) platform, which enables multilingual communication. Our [Thursday Dialogues](#) have ended, and the final version of the Agroecology Schools Toolkit will soon be released. It is good to see agroecological activities growing and flourishing. We hope you enjoy the quarterly packet of news from agroecology's fields!

BILIM NETWORK - WHO WE ARE: BILIM is the interregional and multilingual online platform of exchanges for the Community of Practice on Agroecology in Europe and Central Asia (ECA). Built on 11 Pillars of the [Nyéléni Declaration on Agroecology](#), BILIM is also the name of the Community of Practice, which promotes horizontal knowledge sharing and political capacity building at the national and regional levels. The network supports coordinated advocacy work for agroecology, the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP) and supports the emergence of young agroecology schools.

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AGROECOLOGY STORIES: series of interviews where we present inspiring stories of people and their organizations from Europe and Central Asia who work for an agroecology development in their regions. You will find the interviews on the Bilim platform as well translated in 20 native languages of members of the BILIM community.

Ukrainian way of understanding agroecology - an interview with Anna Danyliak | Ecoaction

"A good thing is that Ukrainian farmers became more visible, they are recognized and became heroes together with our soldiers. (...) No matter what, pandemia, war, nuclear attack or the end of the world - farmers need to work in the fields." – says Anna Danyliak, a sustainable agriculture expert from Ecoaction in Ukraine in an interview with Paulina Jeziorek. Read full interview [here](#)

Shortening the supply chain in Kyrgyzstan - an interview with Madina Sadirdinova | Agency for Development

"This is our idea in practice - giving full information to urban consumers and at the same time supporting smallscale farmers." - says Madina Sadirdinova from Agency for Development Initiatives from Kyrgyzstan in an interview with Barbara Kurek from Agro-Perma-Lab Foundation from Poland. Read full interview [here](#)

Traditional Saami ways of eating - an interview with Valentina Sovkina | Saami Women's Forum

"We have four traditional activities in our region that provide us food: hunting, reindeer breeding, fishing, wild fruits collecting like berries, but also mushrooms and herbs. Traditionally agriculture was not our thing. But with the arrival of the Russian population, we started to plant potatoes and carrots, we also plant blackberries, raspberries and even strawberries." - says Valentina Sovkina, the representative of the Coalition on Indigenous Peoples Food Systems and the head of the Russian Department of The Saami Women Forum in an interview with Paulina Jeziorek from Agro-Perma-Lab Foundation. Read full interview [here](#)



"Our idea is that everybody has the knowledge and lots of agriculture and permaculture knowledge is very intuitive. So, our purpose is to create favourable conditions or an environment, where everybody can hone and develop their skills. The idea is to make education horizontal." - Ana Benoliel Coutinho (Gradina Moldovei)

AGROECOLOGY SCHOOLS' TOOLKIT: THURSDAY DIALOGUES IN 2023 FULL PROGRAMME [here](#) / VIDEO LIBRARY [here](#)

AGROECOLOGY SCHOOLS have become strategic spaces of social movements for scaling up agroecology, strengthening the work for food sovereignty and engaging people, especially youth, in agroecology. An Agroecology School is a self-organised safe space where farmers share knowledge and wisdom on a peer-to-peer principle. The School's methodology is rooted in years of experience of the work done by [La Via Campesina](#) in the methodology *campesino-a-campesino*. Agroecology Schools bridge the gap between practical and theoretical knowledge, as well as technical and political skills. They are holistic and empowering, including two-way learning processes between policymakers, researchers and farmers to build strategic networks with peasant knowledge at the heart of food system transformation.

and region: facilitators, coordinators, educators, policymakers, academics and activists. The events were part of the project: Sharing Knowledge For a Stronger Agroecology Movement in ECA.

Find out more about our dialogue series [here](#)

SELECTION OF PAST EVENTS:

DIALOGUE #4 Mapping Agroecological Territories: Explore with Lili Balogh, how [Hungarian Agroecology Network](#) built collaboration between academia, farmers and many other stakeholders.

MAPPING REPORT [pdf](#) / [watch video](#)

DIALOGUE #7 Reviving Agroecological Diversity In Georgia: listen to Mariam Jorjadze from the [Biological Farming Association Elkana](#) on the many ways, in which the country's agricultural heritage and autonomy are revived hand in hand. [Watch video](#)

DIALOGUE #8 Are You Working With Seeds? Learn About Farmers' Seed Education with Mariana Seremet from [Gradina Molodovei](#) and Ayida Jamangulova from [ADI Dyikan Muras](#), Kyrgyzstan. [Watch video](#)

DIALOGUES #11 and #12 were two special webinars: Bringing Generations in Agroecology in Europe. The two webinars review the work of implementing training and other kinds of knowledge transfer activities in the framework of the Erasmus+ Bridging Generations in Agroecology, in short (BAG). This consortium gathered 6 organisations from Poland, Germany, France, Netherlands, Italy and Switzerland. All partners conduct activities of adult education for agroecology and raise awareness on the issue of knowledge dissemination in agroecology.

DIALOGUE #11 Knowledge Sharing For Farmers' Autonomy And Collaboration with:

[InterAfocg](#), France: Collective Training On Farm Management

[Toekomstboeren](#), Netherlands: Boerenvuur: Transformative Learning With Peasant-To-Peasant In The Netherlands

[Schola Campesina](#), Italy: Agroecology Schools To Build Networks

[Watch video](#)

DIALOGUE #12 Education For Agroecology Transformation with:

[HNEE](#), Germany: Making A Difference Together – Networks Between Science And Practice

[Ziarno](#), Poland: Ecological Folk High School – Teaching Agroecology In Grundtvigian Style

[Swiss School of Biodynamic Agriculture](#): How The Biodynamic Farmers Created One Of The Most Innovative Farmers Schools In Switzerland

[Watch video](#) project *Sharing knowledge for a stronger agroecology movement in ECA*.



OTHER LEARNING & TRAINING RESOURCES

SHORT FILMS: Bridging Generations in Agroecology (BAG)!

Explore a series of beautifully shot [educational films](#) about the work of various training and participatory learning initiatives working for agroecology. Films include [Farmers Lifestyle](#); University for Sustainable Development's [farmer-learner collaborations](#), French trainings strengthening [farmers' decision-making autonomy](#); [Life-giving Garden](#) course; Toekomstboeren's [farmers' organisation](#) and the [Biobagnolese Agroecological farm](#) by Schola Campesina.

NEW PODCAST SERIES - Listen, while you grow!

This podcast series, developed in the frame of the BAG Erasmus + project (2020-2023), is valorizing interviews made in 2017 as part of the online course on the global governance of food and agriculture as well as interventions of participants of Schola Campesina training in 2017 (BioBagnolese farm, Italy). [Listen here](#)

TECHNOLOGY? YES! For knowledge sharing on farms!

[Access Agriculture](#) is a non-profit organisation that supports the distribution of quality farmer-to-farmer training videos to share practical knowledge on sustainable farming and food processing. The video platform hosts content in over 95 languages. To reach high numbers of farmers, it has developed the concept of [Entrepreneurs for Rural](#)

NEW VIDEO: The Un Declaration On Peasants' Rights (Undrop) Explained

Read more and watch the video [here](#)



"I think it is also important to connect people to the market. Consumers and producers learn from each other and recognize each others' needs. It also restores dignity as short chains are personal, people know each other and can build trust. Producers feel much more important than if they just sold products from farmgate to a middleman." - Elene Shatberashvili (Elkana Association)

UPCOMING EVENTS & TRAININGS:

MAY 25th, 2023 10 am CET: THURSDAY DIALOGUE #13 - Agroecology Schools Toolkit with Polina Shubaeva.

JUNE 22nd, 2023 10 am CET: THURSDAY DIALOGUE #14 - Agroecology Schools Toolkit on social movement education and Training Permaculture Teachers (TPT) with Alfred Decker.

JULY 10th-13th, 2023 International Forum of the ECA Agroecology BILIM.network - Bursa, Turkey

This year, the annual 4-day Forum of Bilim Community on Agroecology will be held in Bursa municipality (Turkey). Our organizations that are active in rural development and smallholders' rights, spread all over Europe and Central Asia, will have the chance to meet in person and exchange on our activities. Women-led farming initiatives, seed saving and sharing and agroecology schools are a reality that we are all pushing with great efforts in our diverse countries; facing the impacts of conflicts and invasion, climate change, market-driven rules, environmental crisis, a rural exodus of youth. Grassroots actors in the ECA region, gathered in the Bilim community, need to take decisions on Bilim future strategy and collaboration. Beyond the joyful sharing of experiences, the meeting in Bursa will be an opportunity to build together the future of our Bilim CoP.

PAST EVENTS:**MAY/JUNE 2022: International Training on Agroecology**

In the spring 2022 Schola Campesina Aps (Italy), ADI (Kyrgyzstan), and Çiftçi-sen (Turkey), with the financial support of FAO, hosted agroecology training with the aim of sharing knowledge and raising awareness within the participants' organisations on the opportunities brought by Agroecology. Read more [here](#)

APRIL 2023: Towards Agroecological Futures: Learnings From Participatory Action Research Process. In this seminar, Daniel López shared findings and outcomes from the systematization of agroecological transitions in eight Spanish territories. These cases, in different contexts (rural, urban and city regions) shed light on the processes, challenges and strategies needed to support agroecology transitions. Daniel will also discuss the role of conventional farmers within agroecological transitions. [Event information](#)



“Agroecology is the answer to how to transform and repair our material reality in a food system and rural world that has been devastated by industrial food production and its so-called Green and Blue Revolutions. We see Agroecology as a key form of resistance to an economic system that puts profit before life.” – Nyeleni Declaration 2015

NEWS FROM ORGANIZATIONS FROM ECA REGION

GEORGIA - Elkana: National Workshop and seed exchange in Tbilisi

Biological Farming Association ELKANA's central office organised an open event for interested agroecological/organic seed savers in March 2023. Guest farmers shared their experiences and different seeds and had an opportunity to make their networks. Elkana expert – Benjamin Memarnishvili presented Agricultural Diversity and introduced the heritage crops grown in Elkana Seed Ark Farm in the village of Tsnisi, Samtskhe-Javakhet. Marika Kapanadze talked about the Bilim network and its benefits.

MOLDOVA - Gradina Molodovei: developing permaculture and agroecology

Gradina Moldovei is a Community Association whose mission is to implement and support permaculture (permanent agriculture) which is agroecological, and thus a holistic approach applied to the development of agricultural and food systems integrated into the natural, socio-cultural and local economic context; it also to promote and strengthen the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas as provided for in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and other people working in rural areas (UNDROP). Read more [here](#)

UKRAINE - Ecoaction on water resources

Listen to Anna Danylyak, an expert in the development of sustainable agriculture from Eco Action, talking about how the war affected water resources in Ukraine. Full video [here](#)

KOSOVO - Women's Association STINA: Empowering women in agroecology

Since its establishment, the Stina Association has carried out many activities to support women in expressing their talents. It constantly organises training courses to increase the opportunities for women in various industries. The Stina Association involves in organising various fairs where women promote their products. Read more [here](#)

POLAND - Agro-Perma-Lab: Building Women's Bridges

In March, 23 women met for a four-day workshop on agroecology, food sovereignty and climate catastrophe. The meeting was held as part of the Women's Bridges project, which aims, among other things, to break down stereotypes about rural and urban people. Read more [here](#)

RUSSIA - Tea from different regions of Russia

Find out more about "The SUGREV" project, a collection that contains blends of tea and tea drinks (the so-called tisanes) based on herbs, fruits and berries, typical for different regions of Russia where Indigenous people of Russia live. Read more [here](#)



"We need to go back to indigenous knowledge-based farming systems, now called agroecology, because we know that these systems work peacefully with nature and don't damage the environment." - Elizabeth Mpofu (La Via Campesina)

UPCOMING EVENTS:

MAY 15th, 2023: La Via Campesina 30 years anniversary in Brussels

La Via Campesina is the largest peasant movement in the world and on 15th May peasants will celebrate the rich history of the movement. If you want to be part of it, join via Zoom! Register [here](#). Read more [here](#)

AUGUST 28th, 2023 – DECEMBER 8th Online Courses on Agroecology: This Fall, the UVM Institute for Agroecology is offering two online courses for graduate students, advanced undergrads, as well as activists and professionals seeking creative learning in agroecology. Fall 2023 Semester: August 28th – December 8th, more info: [Online Courses on Agroecology](#).

NOVEMBER 16th-18th, 2023 The Agroecology Europe Forum 2023 | Hungary

Agroecology Europe is delighted to announce to the members and partner organisations that the next Agroecology Europe Forum 2023 will take place in Hungary from Thursday 16 to Saturday 18 November 2023. Stay tuned for further details regarding this amazing event! We look forward meeting you all there! Read more [here](#)

PAST EVENTS:

MARCH 2023: The impacts of digitalization on food systems and family farming (online workshop).

The Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism ([CSIPM](#)) for Relations with the UN Committee on World Food Security hosted a workshop that aimed to build common ground and positioning around key issues related to the impacts of digitalization on food sovereignty and the right to food. Read more [here](#)

MARCH 2023: Book launch from a collection of AE4EU's country reports

Agroecology for Europe has published the first volume of the series "Mapping The Development of Agroecology in Europe". This first issue provides key information on agroecology in 13 European countries (Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Greece, Italy, Kosovo, Malta, Montenegro, Northern Macedonia and Romania). Read more [here](#). Download the publication [here](#)

APRIL 2023: WEBINAR: Better Policies for Women in Food Systems

The OECD Food System Webinar Series hosted a meeting on the report Gender and Food Systems: Overcoming Evidence Gaps. During the meeting, the unique contribution of women to agriculture and food systems was repeatedly highlighted. Read the report [here](#). Watch the full presentation [here](#)

APRIL 2023: Urban And Peri-Urban Agriculture For Resilient, Sustainable And Inclusive Food Systems

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), RUAF Global Partnership on Sustainable Urban Agriculture and Food Systems, Rikolto, and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) co-organized a side event during the 4th Global Conference of the Sustainable Food Systems Programme. The event aimed to shed light on the role of urban and peri-urban agriculture (UPA) in fostering resilient, sustainable, and inclusive food systems. Download the Urban and peri-urban agriculture sourcebook [here](#)

Consumer Grassroots Association (CGA) "Consumer Guide on Agroecology"

This consumer guide on agroecology presents ten key issues and areas of agroecology which can create Kenyan consumer awareness. The guide could be useful for decision-makers and producers who play a critical role in



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UPCOMING NEWSLETTER: July/August 2023

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