

Annual Conference - Region in focus: Water as a precious resource

Activities and rationale

The annual conference of the Austrian CAP Network took place on October 2, 2024, in Lower Austria in the northeast of the country. **The topic was sustainable water management.**

Each year, the conference follows a place-based approach: it is organised in a specific region and addresses a topic that is particularly relevant for local challenges and development needs and shows how the region deals with these challenges.

Lower Austria is increasingly affected by climate change, facing both water scarcity and periods of water surplus. Changes in precipitation patterns, evaporation and water availability mean that droughts and heavy rainfall events can occur within the same region. The event brought together over 150 stakeholders from rural areas. Through keynotes, practical sessions, a photo competition and project presentations, the conference promoted knowledge exchange, innovation and concrete solutions, while strengthening the resilience of rural regions.



Excursion: Maintenance and preservation of wet meadows



Excursion to a soil erosion trial site



Award ceremony for the winners of the photo competition under the motto "Resilience in Rural Areas"

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Results, benefits and impacts

The conference **brought together different stakeholders**, including farmers, regional managers, advisors, people from the managing authorities and young people. Eight water-related projects from various CAP measures were presented, helping to raise awareness about water management and resilience.

Excursions, workshops and a keynote on resilience and encouraged active participation. The photo presentation on the topic of resilience by young people added a creative element.

The main challenge was organising many different contributions and keeping complex topics like water and resilience clear, practical and relevant for all participants within a limited time.

Take-away message

Complex topics like water management require strong cross-sector dialogue and practical exchange. Bringing together agriculture, municipalities, advisors and regional managers in an interactive format creates trust, shared understanding and concrete follow-up actions. Real-life project examples make discussions more solution-oriented and inspire replication.

Recommendations: focus on practical case studies, allow enough space for discussion, and actively involve regional multipliers. Clear thematic focus and interactive elements are crucial to ensure engagement and long-term impact beyond the event itself.



Austria

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