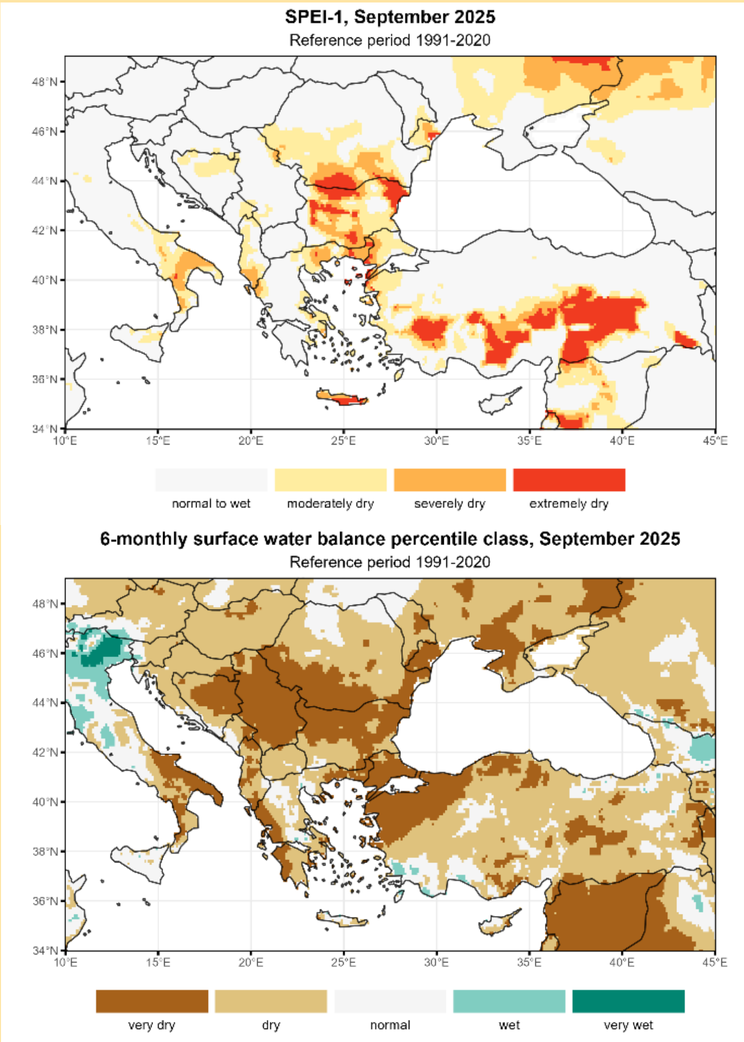
# DROUGHT MONITORING BULLETIN

September 2025

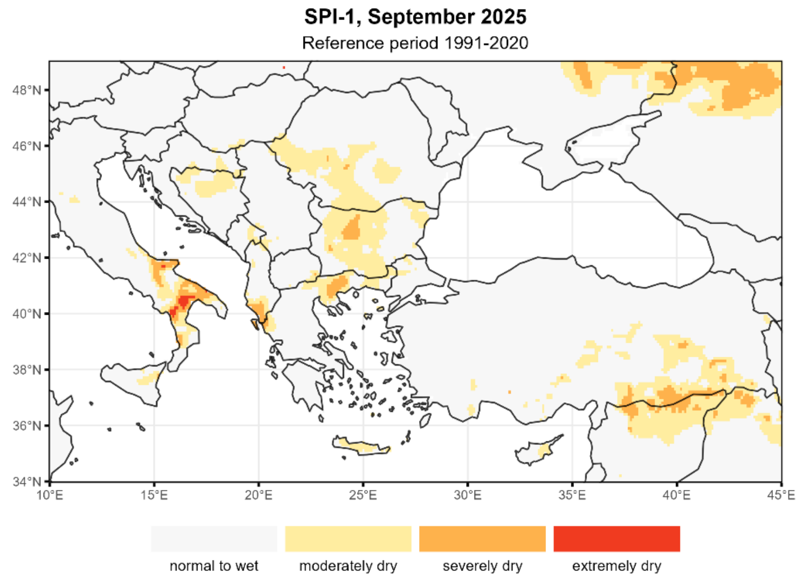
## HOT SPOT

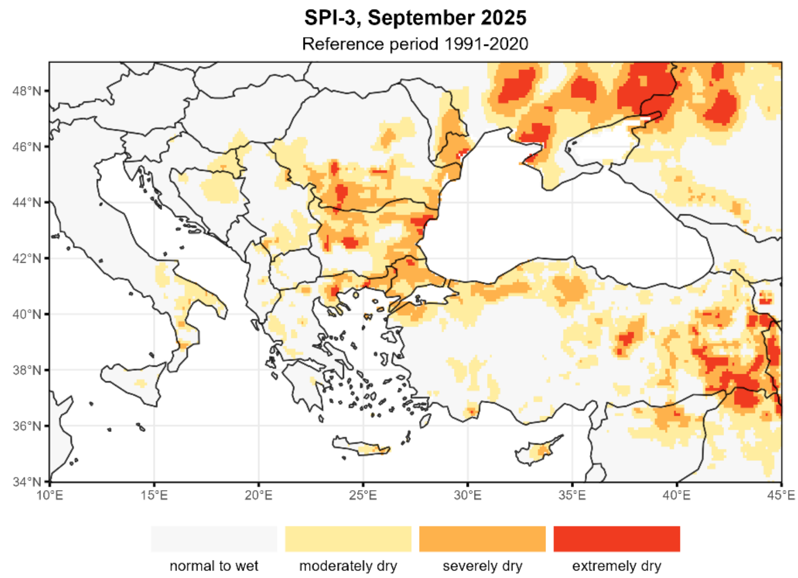



- Precipitation conditions were this September diverse across the region, with normal to dry ones prevailing, though in localised areas September was wetter than usual. However, standardised precipitation-evaporation index (SPEI) for September 2025 shows some areas still experienced a combined effect of under-average rainfall rate and unusually high evaporative demand, creating double-factor ground for severely to extremely dry atmospheric conditions this September.
- The 6-monthly accumulations of surface water balance, between April and September, reveal nearly the entire region ended the vegetation season in noticeable 6-monthly deficit, most of it on the account of persistently drier-than-usual each month from June onward. Across Balkan Peninsula's central and eastern parts, western Greece and northwestern Turkey, this vegetation season's surface water balance deficit was one of the highest of the 1991-2020 records. Central Serbia recorded six consecutive months of deficit, with surplus last experienced in March 2025.

## PRECIPITATION CONDITIONS

Figures below show standardized precipitation index (**SPI**) **for September 2025 at one- and 3-monthly scales**. Unitless SPI values present the deviation of the accumulated precipitations from the long-term mean, suggesting how (in)frequent the occurrence of such value was in the past. SPI values lower than -1 that go as low as -1.5, -2 or below -2 and shall correspond respectively to the occurrence of such precipitation deficit in 9.2 %, 4.4 % or 2.3 % of the time in a long-term series of data, are arbitrary grouped into drought intensity classes labelled as moderate, severe or extreme. Monthly SPI indicates drought conditions that may have impact on vegetation health, while 3-monthly SPI can be indicative also for surface water status.

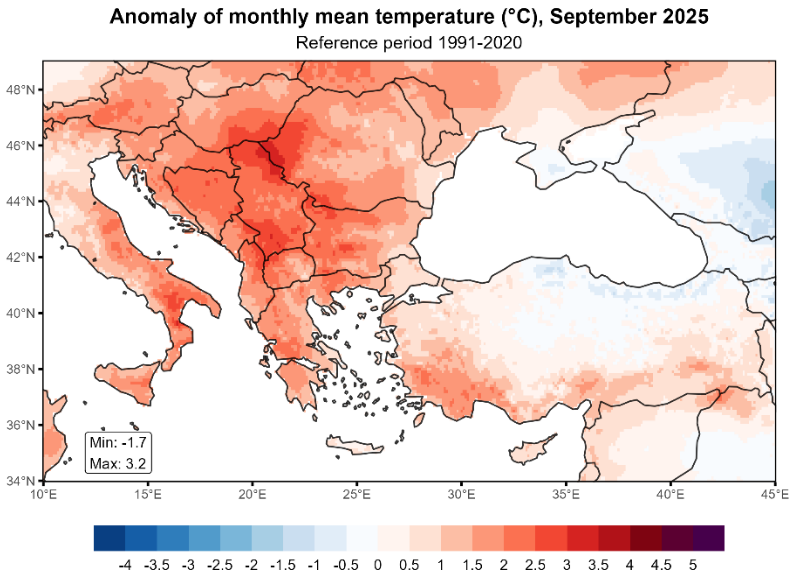


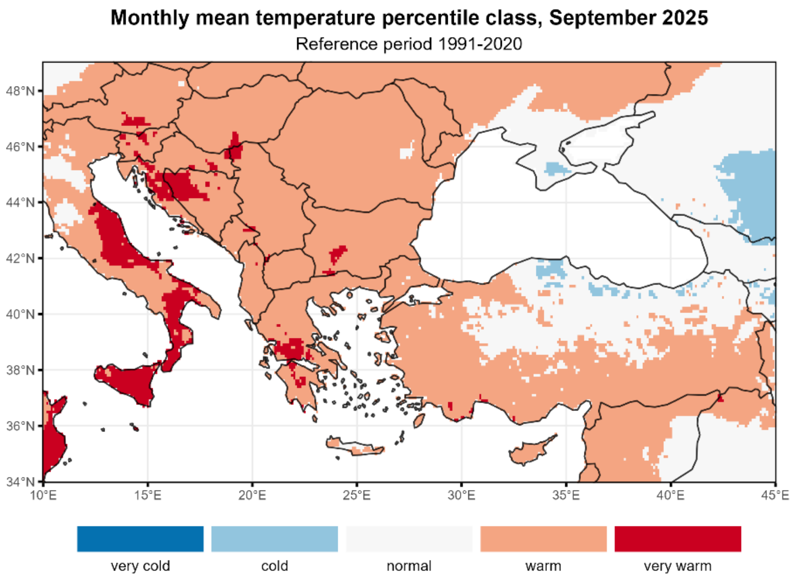




- Vast part of the region received normal or under-average precipitation levels this September, only localised areas recorded higher than usual precipitation amount.
- Above-average rainfall rate was limited mostly to northernmost parts of Balkan Peninsula and of Turkey, however, surplus did mainly not exceed 50 mm.
- Across wider central Balkan Peninsula, from Bosnia and Herzegovina to northwestern Greece, Bulgaria and southern half of Romania, precipitation deficit prevailed this September. It brought up to 75 mm less rain than usual to most of these areas, across Albania and over to Montenegro and to Greece up to 125 mm less.
- For many parts of central and central-eastern Balkan Peninsula experiencing precipitation deficits this month, September was the fourth month in a row bringing less rain than normal for this time of the year, in parts of Serbia and eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina the fifth month in a row.
- 3-monthly precipitation overview from July to September shows nearly the entire region, except for the Adriatic Sea area, parts of Hungary, northern Romania, northern Moldova and scattered areas in central and western Turkey, recorded considerable rainfall deficit. Along eastern Balkan Peninsula and eastern Turkey, the 3-monthly deficit of 100-200 mm ranks among the highest of the local long-term records.

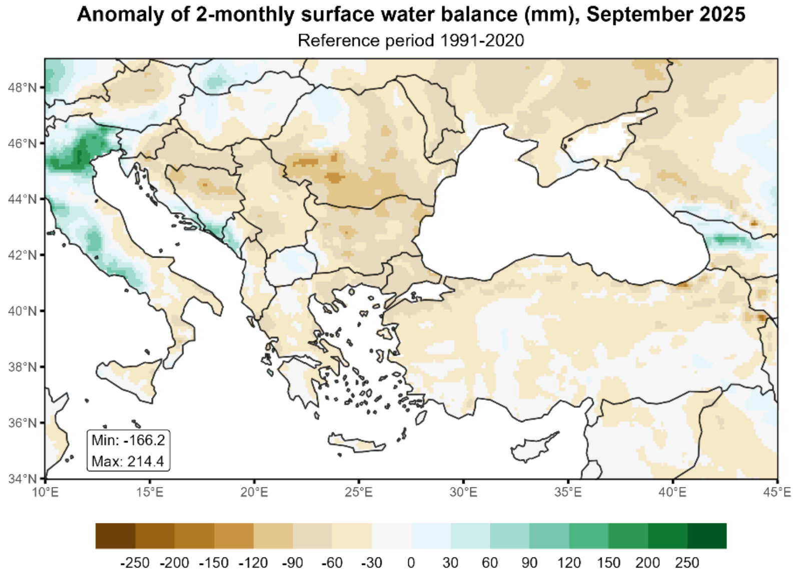
## AIR TEMPERATURE AND SURFACE WATER BALANCE

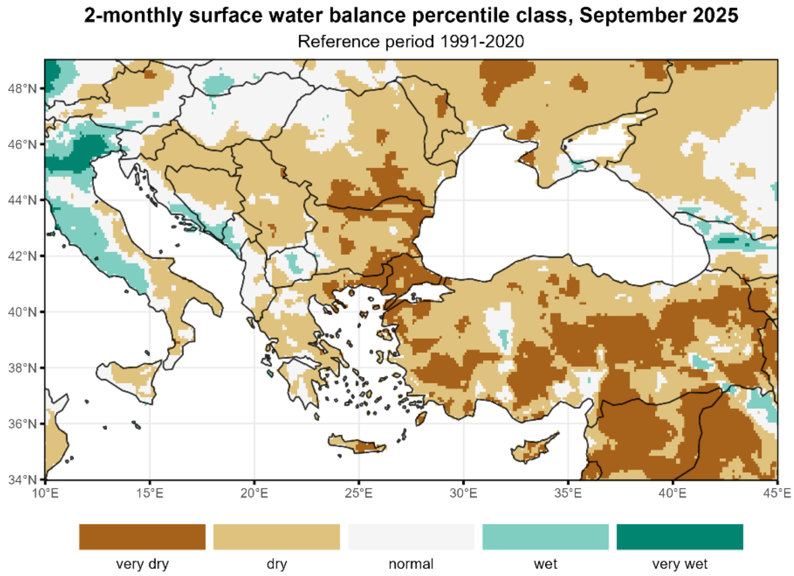
Figures below show anomalies of **monthly mean air temperature and 2-monthly accumulated surface water balance** (precipitation reduced for evapotranspiration) in absolute units and in percentile classes for **September 2025** in comparison to the 1991-2020 reference datasets. The two extreme percentile classes have a 5-percent range, and each of the middle three classes has a 30-percent range. A percentile value (class) indicates the position of a score within an ordered dataset, showing the percentage of scores that fall below (within) it.




- Across the entire Balkan Peninsula and along western and southern Turkey, warm air temperatures continued into September and did not gradually scale down as the autumn began.
- Averaged over the month, September was across this part of the region at least 1.5 °C warmer than usual, but especially warm were air temperatures in central Balkan Peninsula where they exceeded the average for 2.5–3.5 °C.
- Meanwhile over localised areas along Turkey's north and north-west, September air temperatures were generally slightly lower than normal for this time of the year, up to 1 °C on average.
- For many areas across the southern half of Turkey, unusually high air temperatures eased down for the first time since April, as during every month in between they experienced one of the highest recorded anomalies of the local long-term record. For much of the Balkan Peninsula, June and July brought extreme heat which eased down during August, then September ended up warmer than usual again.



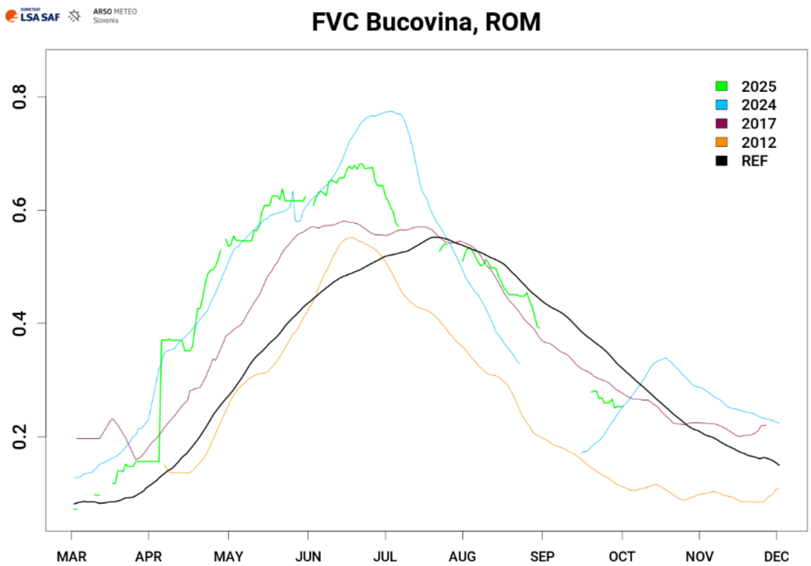

- Surface water balance of the past two months shows extensive spread of deficit across the region, especially prominent across wider central and eastern Balkan Peninsula.
- On the account of monthly deficit during both August as well as September, surface water balance was across central Balkan Peninsula from eastern Slovenia to Bulgaria and southern Moldova short of its normal for 90–120 mm, locally in southwestern Romania up to 150 mm lower.
- Similar deficit was present also all along northern Turkey, though mostly on the account of very dry surface water balance conditions in August.
- The rest of the area under drier than usual surface water balance conditions recorded up to 90 mm of deficit, obtained mainly during September.
- Only some areas ended the August-September period in average or even higher than usual surface water balance across the region. They were mostly limited to far northern parts of the region, from Hungary over to northwestern Romania where 2-monthly accumulations reveal no particular surplus of surface water balance; and to the areas along the Adriatic Sea which recorded unusually high surface water balance in August but no noticeable surplus in September for the exception of the border area between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, which recorded between 60 and 120 mm of surface water balance surplus during the August-September period.

## VEGETATION DEVELOPMENT

***Fraction of vegetation cover (FVC)*** *is a vegetation index based on remote sensing (satellite) measurements and shows fraction of the total pixel area covered by green vegetation. As such, it has in combination with atmospheric parameters proved useful also for drought monitoring. Values vary according to the vegetation stage and possible damages, including those by extreme weather conditions. In general, they are low at the beginning of the growing season, highest at full seasonal development, then drop with vegetation senescence. Line shape depends on the sort of vegetation at the given location.*

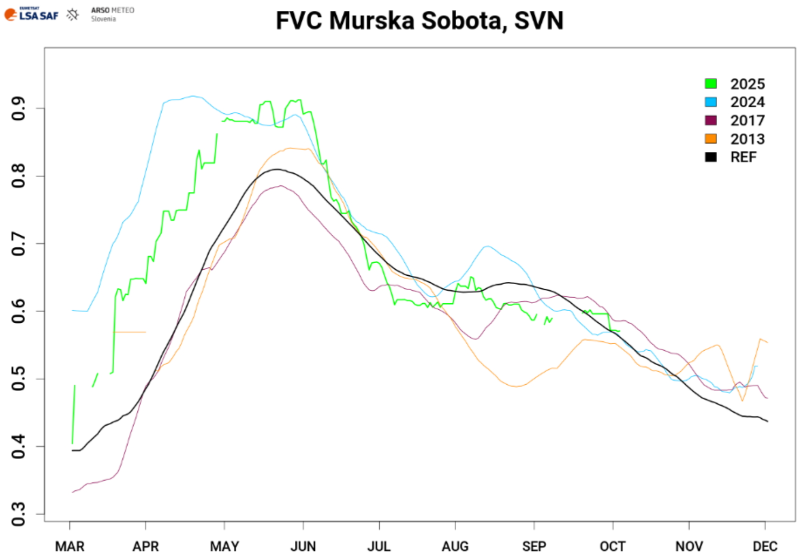
Graphs below show the **fraction of unit area covered with green vegetation** in accordance with FVC index, as recorded **on 11 October 2025** at selected locations across southeastern Europe. Current year's values are presented in green line, while graphs include also the reference line (long-term average), and lines for the previous year, drought year 2017 and drought year 2012 (or 2013) for comparison. Missing values or sharp changes may be linked to prolonged cloudy weather, snow cover, extreme weather events, human intervention or changes to product by the product provider.

## ROMANIA

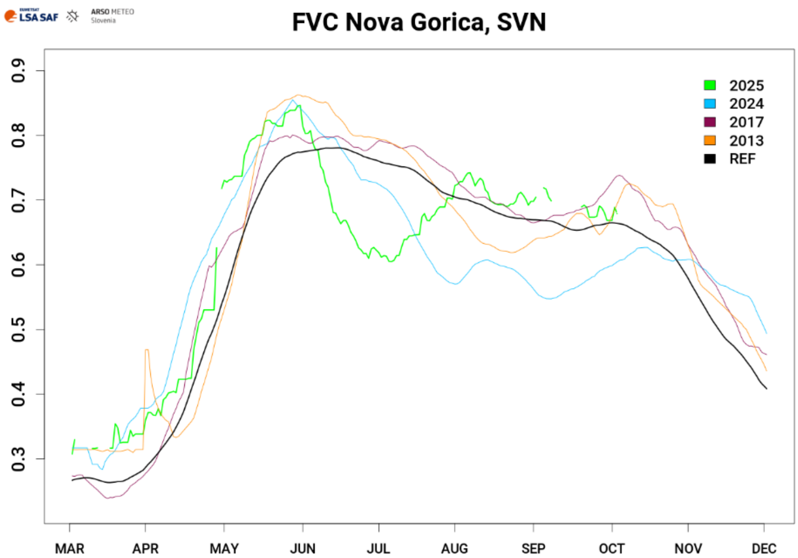



- Vegetation in Bucovina, northern Romania experienced abundant growth and expansion during the growing part of the vegetation season. Although it kicked into growth as usual in mid-May, it covered about 20 % greater unit of area before mid-April and kept it throughout spring, up to mid-June.
- Although vegetation would normally continue growing and expanding up to late July, this year the peak level of cover was present in mid-June, up to 20 % greater than normal, after which the unfavourable summer weather conditions brought senescence phase almost a month forward.
- The gradual decline in level of cover, on-going since mid-June, appeared to be most intense in second half of June when nearly the entire above-average level of cover was lost, as well as in first half of September when FVC level dropped from just below-the-average 45 % down to 30 %, the decline that resembles the one experienced in drought year 2017.

## SLOVENIA

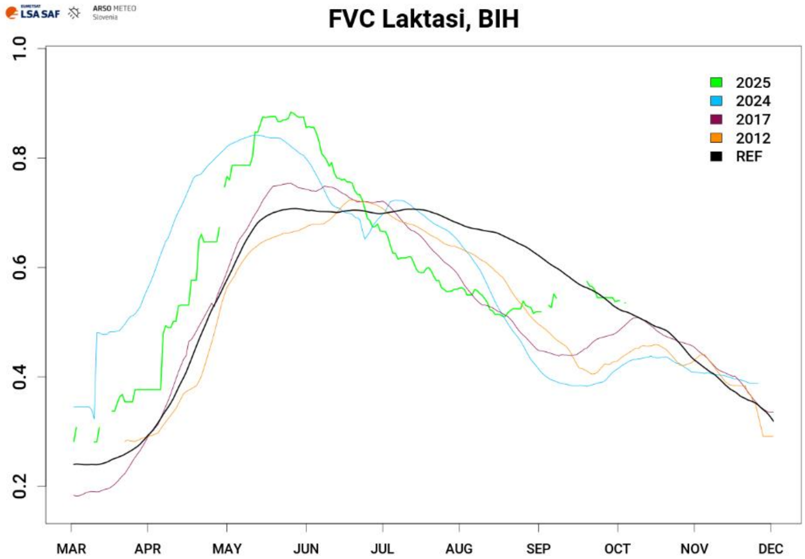



- In Murska Sobota, northeastern Slovenia, the growing part of the season was characterised by above-average expansion of the green canopy. Vegetation boosted into growth in first half of March, during which it grew to cover more than 15 % greater unit of area, and favourable weather conditions throughout the rest of the spring sustained the above-average level of cover.
- Seasonal peak lasted more than a month altogether and expanded over 10 % greater than normal unit of area. However, during unfavourable June weather conditions FVC dropped by 30 % and remained under-average well into autumn, with only temporal recovery in early days of August.

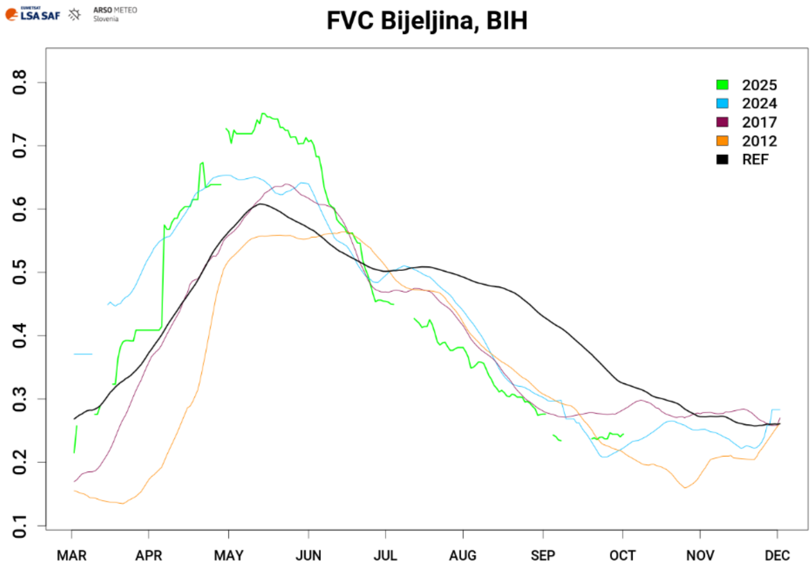



- Vegetation season began slightly earlier than normal in Nova Gorica, western Slovenia, followed by a regular rate of vegetation development throughout the rest of the spring. The growing part of the season continued up to the regular seasonal peak time in mid-May, consequently reaching about 10 % greater level of cover.
- June weather conditions proved especially unfavourable for normal progression of the vegetation season, as FVC fell by approximately 25 % before the end of the month. Vegetation restored its regular level of cover with green canopy by the end of July, after which the senescence phase appeared to regain its usual rate of progression throughout the rest of the summer and into autumn.

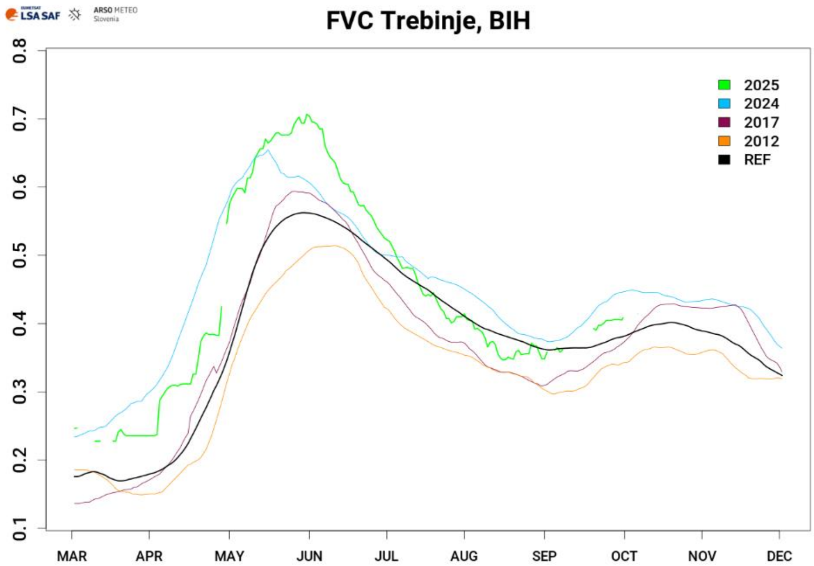
## BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA (REPUBLIC OF SRPSKA)




- An earlier start to the vegetation season in Laktasi, northwestern Bosnia and Herzegovina, along with favourable growing conditions in spring resulted in advanced level of cover throughout the growing part of the season and an exceeded level of cover at the seasonal peak in mid-May, up to 20 %.
- Unfavourable weather conditions during summer months sped up the senescence phase, as the level of cover with green canopy saw continuous decline from June to August, from 90 % down to 50 % while normally the level of cover stays almost unchanged throughout summer months. September ended the decline, a positive difference in comparison to the other recent drought years.

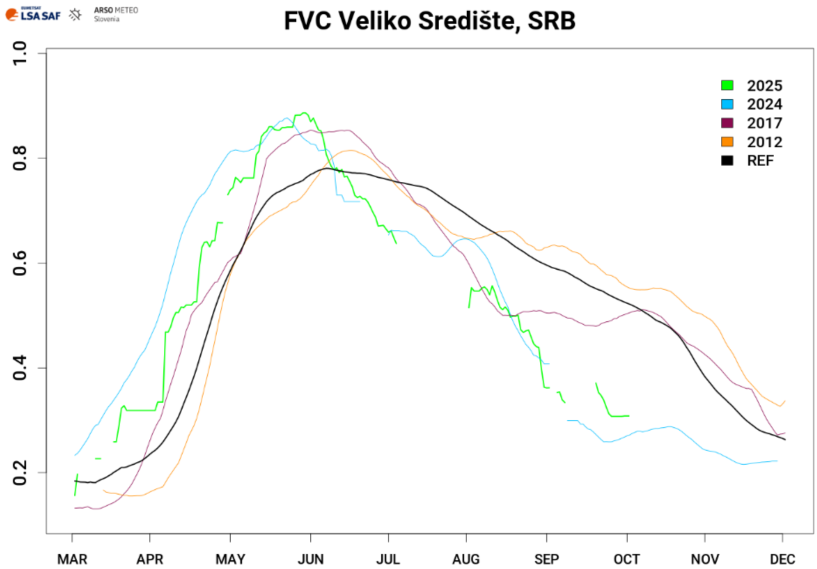



- In Bijeljina, northeastern Bosnia and Herzegovina, April and May weather conditions were especially favourable for vegetation development, during which vegetation advanced in level of cover. Green canopy was from mid-April to early June covering 15 % greater than normal part of unit area.
- Summer weather conditions proved highly unfavourable for normal vegetation senescence, as level of cover was in fast and steady decline from mid-June to early September. The above-average level of cover was lost before the end of June, after which FVC continued to drop at the higher-than-normal rate and ceased only in September when it reached as low as 20 % of area covered, approximately half the regular for this time of year.

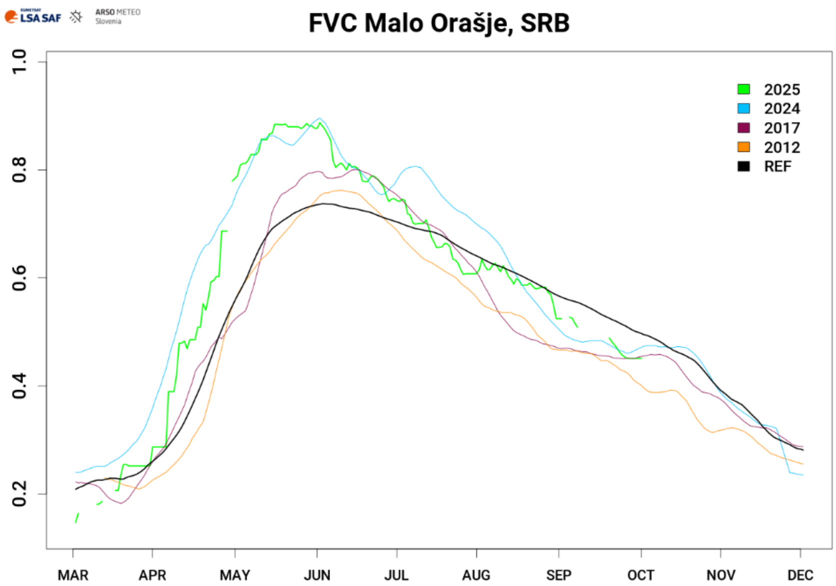



- In Trebinje, southern Bosnia and Herzegovina, vegetation growth began approximately two weeks earlier than usual and after progressing at the regular growing rate it experienced above-average seasonal peak period, in duration as well as extent of cover which was up to 20 % greater than normal.
- With the coming of summer weather conditions, senescence phase was sped up and level of cover seen to decline at the higher rate than usual during summer months, returning to the average levels before mid-July. Green vegetation continued to cover slightly lesser- than-normal part of unit area until the end of summer and restored its typical autumn boost in growth about 2–3 weeks earlier.

## SERBIA

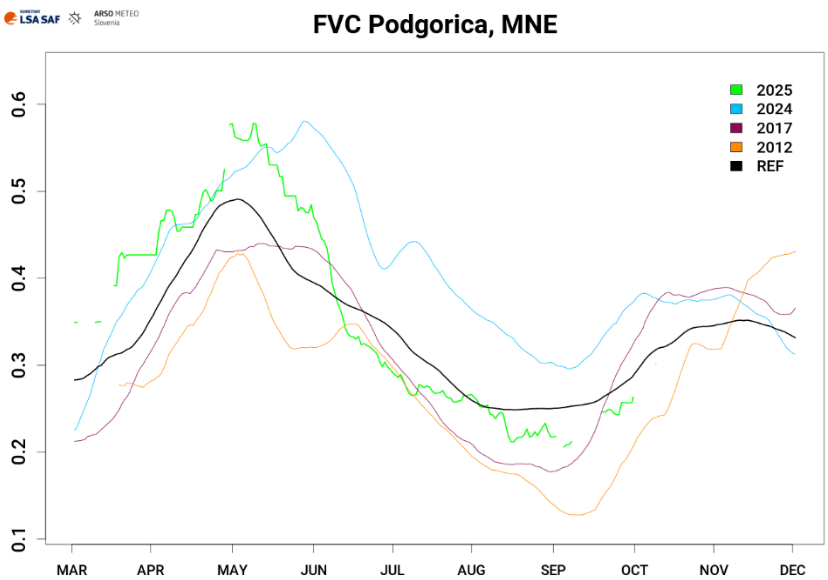



- As vegetation boosted into growth up to a month earlier in Veliko Srediste, northeastern Serbia, the longer growing part of the season supported by favourable weather conditions resulted in up to 90 % of unit area covered with green canopy during seasonal peak in late May.
- Unfavourable summer weather conditions for vegetation development saw steady decline in level of cover with green canopy. The above-average extent of cover was lost before mid-June, with further decline at the rate much higher than normal continuing almost uninterrupted well into autumn. At the end of September, green canopy was present across 30 % instead of the usual 55 % of unit area.



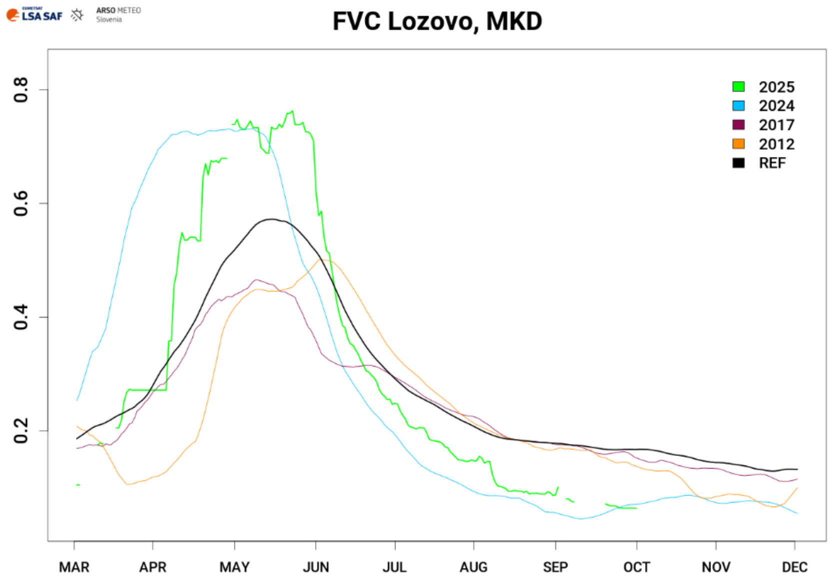

- In Malo Orasje, central-eastern Serbia, spring weather conditions supported vegetation growth, as a result of which green canopy was at the seasonal high covering up to 20 % greater than usual part of unit area.
- Vegetation season 2025 progressed similarly as the year before, sharing similarities also in the sped-up senescence phase right after the seasonal peak. The decline that followed progressed at the higher-than-normal rate, bringing the level of cover below the average before mid-July. The decline appeared to slow down during August but brought FVC further below the average during September.

## MONTENEGRO

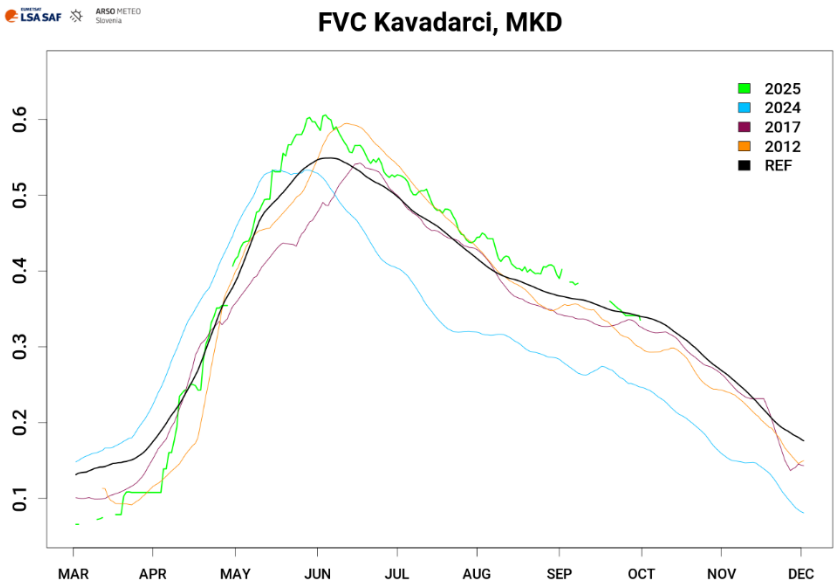



- Spring weather conditions favoured vegetation growth in Podgorica, southern Montenegro, especially during the seasonal peak when additional boost in growth resulted in covering up to 10 % greater than normal part of unit area.
- Senescence phase progressed normally until June during which it was sped up by unfavourable weather conditions, resulting in loss of green canopy across nearly 20 % of the unit area. FVC remained under-average throughout summer, with further decline observed at the end of August.

## NORTH MACEDONIA

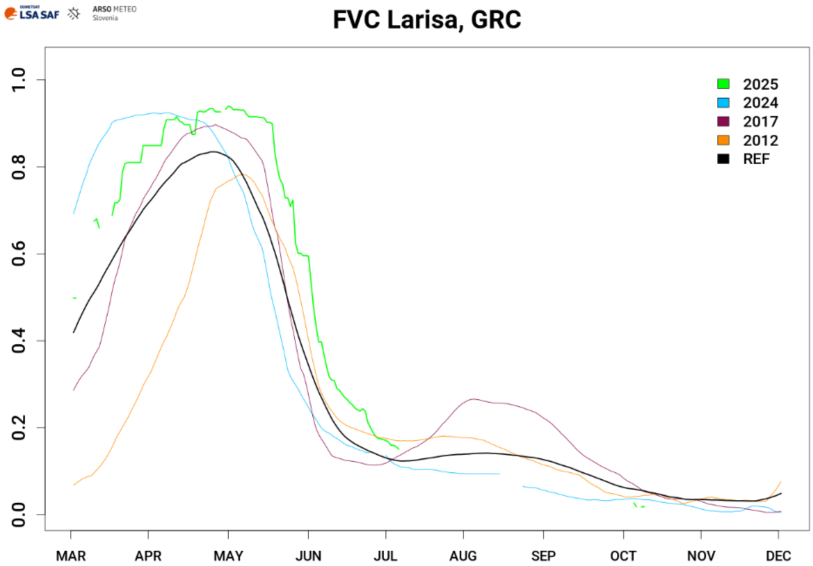



- Weather conditions in Lozovo, central North Macedonia were especially favourable for vegetation growth and development in the second half of spring, resulting in abundant, longer lasting and up to 20 % greater than usual level of cover with green canopy between mid-April and early June.
- As summer months arrived, vegetation experienced rapid decline in extend of cover, losing the abundance of seasonal peak within the first two weeks of June. Similarly, as the year before, the steady decline continued uninterrupted throughout summer and September, bringing FVC to less than 10 %.

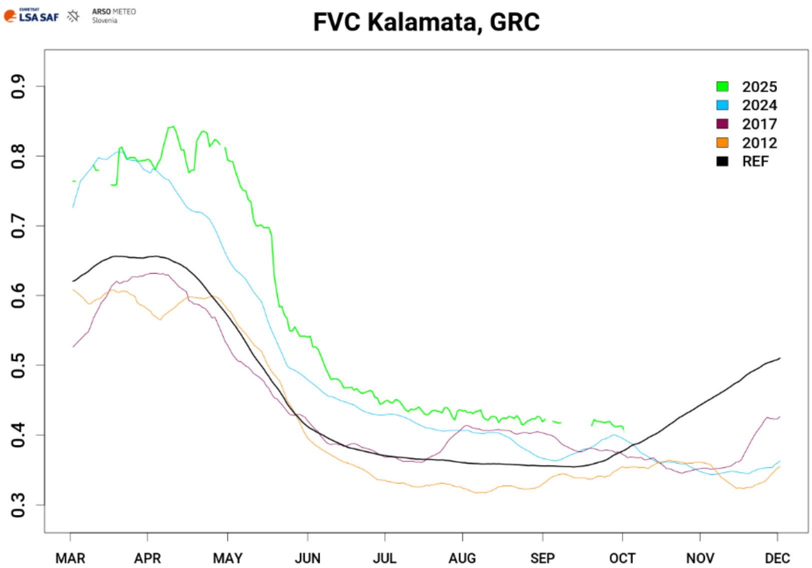



- Vegetation in Kavadarci, southern North Macedonia began its growing season on the base of well lower than normal level of cover but supported by favourable weather conditions it caught up the regular pace of growth and expansion throughout spring months. FVC values for late May suggest also slightly above-average peak level of cover.
- Senescence phase that followed continued at its usual rate throughout summer months as well as into autumn, resulting in slightly greater than normal level of cover with green canopy, mostly as a result of greater expansion at the seasonal peak.

## GREECE

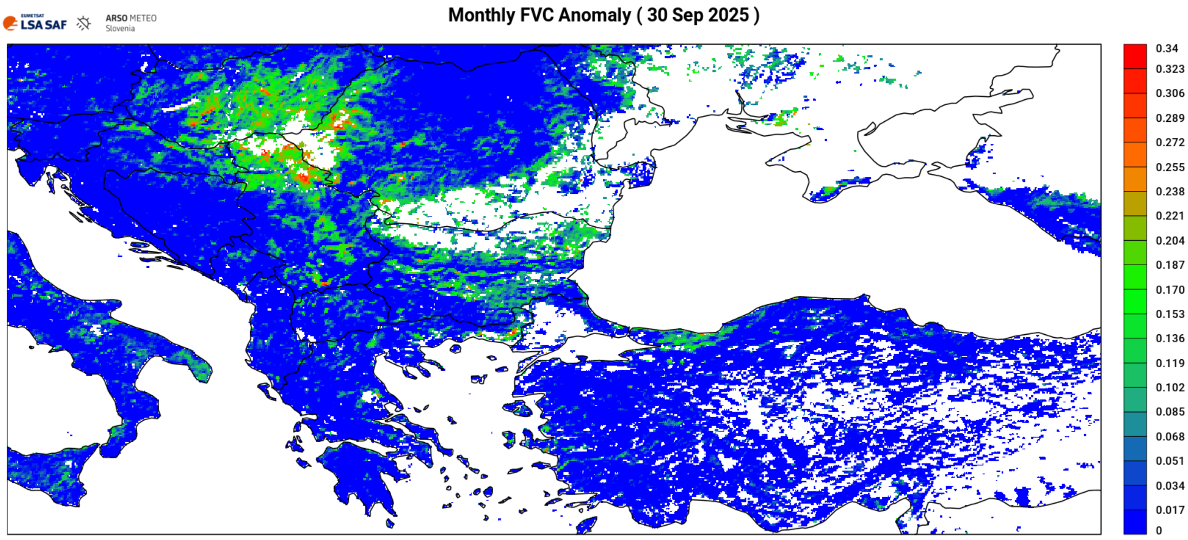



- Spring weather conditions proved favourable for vegetation growth in Larisa, central-eastern Greece, as canopy was continuously covering up to 15 % greater part of unit area during spring and remained at seasonal high for up to 2 weeks longer than usual, delaying the onset of the senescence phase.
- The natural decline in level of cover that followed progressed at its usual rate throughout June. The absence of recorded FVC data between July and September give little indication on progression of the vegetation senescence, however, their late reappearance in early October suggests the vegetation cover shrunk slightly more than it normally does by mid-October.




- Weather conditions well-supported vegetation development during its growing part of the season also in Kalamata, southern Greece, resulting in almost 20 % greater part of unit area covered during seasonal peak and in the latter lasting up to 2 weeks longer than normal.
- During first half of May, the decline at the early stage of the senescence phase progressed at the higher rate than normally for this time of the year. However, weather conditions in the less active part of the season, between June and September, were mild on vegetation senescence, leaving the level of cover with green canopy approximately 10 % above the long-term average.

Figure below shows negative anomaly of **accumulated 30-day FVC** as recorded on **30 September 2025** in comparison to the average of the past 21 years (2004–2024) and is used experimentally.




FVC accumulations show extensive areas across central and eastern Balkan Peninsula with the level of cover with green vegetation considerably below the long-term average for this time of the year. Wide part of the Pannonian Basin lowlands, from eastern Slovenia and central Serbia to eastern Hungary, was at the end of September recording up to 20 % lesser extent of green canopy, with several localities in its central part across the Hungary-Serba-Romania border recording even greater loss of the extent of green canopy that per unit area, exceeding 35 %. Considerable part of the lowlands along the lower stretch of the Danube River, its delta and southern Moldova were also affected, showing signs of at least 15 % lesser than normal level of vegetation cover. Locally across southern parts of the Balkan Peninsula, including southern Serbia, North Macedonia, locally across northern half of Greece and Bulgaria, the level of vegetation cover stood below the average, for up to 15 %. Areas of no FVC data, especially when surrounded by high level of negative anomalies, might indicate no detection of green vegetation.

## DROUGHT IMPACT REPORTS

### HUNGARY

The Hungarian **apple** harvest could decline significantly this year due to extreme weather events this vegetation season including drought, leading to one of the weakest seasons of all time. According to the estimates, the amount of domestic table apples reaching the market this year accounted for only 55–65 % of a good harvest year, while the volume of industrial apples accounts for barely 20–25 %. [1] As the **walnut** harvest begun, it became clear that in most places the harvest will not be bountiful due to extreme heat and an unprecedentedly dry summer. [2] The **forests** of Vertes and Gerecse were also under significant stress. Previously lush, green pine forests were in many places left yellowish, reddish – a sign of death –, posing high ecological risk but also an increased risk of forest fires. [3]

The **Tisza River**, Hungary's second largest river, was this year experiencing severe water shortage. Its regions were characterized by drying up backwaters, dwindling groundwater reserves, and increasing drought. In its riverbed in Vezsenny, south of Szolnok, the water level was barely ankles high. [4] By early October, water level at **Lake Balaton** dropped drastically and receded for several meters along the shore at many section of the lake. Beaches became dry, sailboats became stuck in the mud, and in some places newly revealed riverbeds became walkable on foot. [5, 6, 7] The water level of **Lake Velence** has dropped dramatically over the past year: due to persistent drought and intense evaporation, it was possible to walk across the riverbed with dry feet. At Agard, the water level of just 67 cm was recorded in early October, which is a dramatically low, especially when compared to the last year's water level of 112 cm. [8, 9] Extremely dry summer and persistent heat for weeks caused dramatic changes in the **lakes** of the Tatabanya region, northern Hungary. Lake Sikvolgyi, a popular hiking and fishing spot, was struggling with critically low water levels: the lake's shore has receded, the water surface drastically decreased, and the landscape became desolate as water levels hit historical low. Fishing became practically impossible, boats were pulled ashore, and riverbed became cracked. The low water level hd a serious impact on **fish populations, bird species, and coastal vegetation**. Anglers reported that some fish species disappeared or their populations decreased dramatically. [3]

[1] https://www.atv.hu/belfold/20250907/alma-termes-dragasag/
[2] https://www.agroinform.hu/kerteszet_szoleszet/draga-lesz-az-idei-a-bejgli-85916-001
[3] https://www.agroinform.hu/kornyezetvedelem/dramai-allapotok-a-helyiek-a-legrosszabbtol-tartanak-85609-001
[4] https://24.hu/tudomany/2025/09/04/tisza-videk-kiszaradasa-aszaly-nem-viznek-valo-videk-vizhiany/
[5] https://www.atv.hu/belfold/20251007/magyarorszag-talajnedvesseg-csapadek/
[6] https://24.hu/tudomany/2025/10/07/balaton-alacsony-vizallas-kiszaradas-2025-oktober/
[7] https://index.hu/belfold/2025/10/05/balaton-alacsony-vizallas-aszaly-eso/
[8] https://index.hu/belfold/2025/10/08/velencei-to-balaton-aszaly-vizallas/
[9] https://www.agroinform.hu/idojaras_hirek/szaraz-medrek-mi-tortenik-a-tavakkal-86233-001

## BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Due to the long-term drought, yields of **various grain, fruit and vegetables** were halved and their quality was extremely poor. Numerous agricultural crops were harvested or picked earlier than usual this year. It became certain there would be a shortage of **animal feed** and the quantity available in the market would be very expensive. Many farmers would end the year in economic losses. [1]

[1] https://24sata.info/bico-dugotrajna-susa-prepolovila-prinose-steta-ce-se-tek-zbrajati/

## SERBIA

As the corn harvest began in Vojvodina, northern Serbia, farmers from Srem, Banat and Backa agree this year's yields were below expectations. Last year the average **corn yield** in Serbia was around 7.8 tons/ha, however yield on some plots in Banat barely exceeded 3–5 tons/ha, while slightly better yields were recorded in Srem and Backa, between 6 and 7.5 tons/ha. [1, 2, 3] This year's poor harvest of agricultural products is thought to **reduce GDP** by 1–2 %. According to an agroeconomist, this year's drought might have very serious consequences on, first of all, the economic situation of agricultural producers, the overall balances in the country, the export balances and foreign trade exchange. [4] In mid-September, tractors from all over Serbia gathered in front of the Vojvodina Government building in Novi Sad for a **farmers' protest**. They claim that the state does not offer any help due to the "catastrophic" drought that at least halved their yield, and did not fulfil the previously agreed demands, thus farmers requested urgent assistance. [5, 6, 7]

Prolonged drought during summer months brought the water level of the Toplica River, southern Serbia almost to the **biological minimum** for the survival of fish stocks. Numerous indigenous fish species in the Toplica and its tributary Kosanica were seriously endangered, where interventions with water from tankers were necessary to save fish in the few whirlpools. [8]

[1] https://www.rtv.rs/sr_lat/vojvodina/novi-sad/susa-znatno-umanjila-rod-kukuruza_1659405.html

[2] https://www.kamatica.com/analiza/susa-prepolovila-rod-kukuruza-u-vojvodini/75436
[3] https://www.pirotskevesti.rs/odrzan-dan-polja-kukuruza-i-suncokreta-susa-desetkovala-prinose/
[4] https://www.rtv.rs/sr_lat/ekonomija/aktuelno/prostran-zbog-suse-bdp-ce-biti-manji-jedan-ili-dva-odsto_1659566.html
[5] https://lat.sputnikportal.rs/20250915/protest-poljoprivrednika-u-novom-sadu-1190164302.html
[6] https://resetka.rs/poljoprivrednici-najavljuju-proteste-zbog-katastrofalne-suse-i-neispunjenih-obecanja-drzave/
[7] https://www.021.rs/info/srbija/421594/susa-ubila-rod-a-stari-problemi-se-ne-resavaju-traze-li-poljoprivrednici-nerealno-mnogo-da-bi-opstali
[8] https://www.rts.rs/vesti/srbija-danas/5790486/zbog-suse-ugrozene-autohtone-vrste-riba-u-toplici.html

## MONTENEGRO

During July and August 2025, Montenegro faced one of the most severe wildfire seasons in the past two decades. Extreme drought, high temperatures and strong winds contributed to the rapid escalation of fires across the country, causing extensive damage to nature, agriculture and local communities. Agricultural losses were reflected mostly in reduced yields of **corn, grapevine, olives, and vegetables** (Podgorica and Danilovgrad – Zeta and Bjelopavlici; Niksic – Niksicka Zupa and surrounding areas), livestock farmers and their hers were affected by **lack of pasture and water** (Bijelo Polje, Berane, Rozaje localities), while at the same time irrigation was restricted due to **hydrological drought** showing in low water levels and reductions. In Podgorica surroundings alone, 260 damage claims were submitted.

During that time, over 110 **wildfires** were recorded across the country. Most affected were Podgorica with its surroundings of Kuci, Piperi, Mrke, Dinosa; but also Niksic, Danilovgrad, Cetinje and Tivat regions. Altogether, more than 10,000 ha of forest and agricultural land was burnt. As a result, the Ministry of Interior of Montenegro requested international assistance through NATO and EU mechanisms.

Extracted from:
https://www.dan.co.me/crna-gora/u-niksicu-buktali-pozari-na-sve-strane-5308216
https://www.dan.co.me/besovic-aktivni-pozari-u-sest-opstina
https://www.dan.co.me/video-u-buljarici-i-dalje-kriticno
https://www.dan.co.me/podnosenje-zahtjeva-za-procjenu-stete-od-pozara-traje-15-dana
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## ROMANIA

In Timis County, western Romania, **spring crops** of this year were declared calamities due to drought. For corn the damages were estimated at 60–100 %, for sunflower between 40 and 100 %, and soybean crops had a calamity range of 40–90 %. [1] In Gorj County, southwestern Romania, the crops affected by this year's drought include corn, sunflowers, sorghum, fodder plants, potato, field vegetables and fruit trees. Estimates indicated around 2,000 ha of agricultural land of altogether 500 farmers affected by drought. [2] The Gorj Forestry Directorate was this year unable to harvest **berries** due to persistent drought that completely compromised the harvest. [3] For the same reason, the **walnut** harvest in Gorj County was 30–40 % lower than in 2024, when it was already halved compared to the previous year. Walnuts dried up before reaching maturity, as reported especially by producers in the south of the country. The knock-on effect could also include the increase in prices. [4] According to the County Agricultural Directorate, over 92,000 ha of spring agricultural crops were affected by drought in Olt County, southwestern Romania, with the largest damages in **sunflower and corn** yield. The proportion to which the crops were affected is around 80 % for sunflowers and 90–100 % for corn. [5] Of the forest fruits (medicinal plants), drought greatly affected the quality of **rose hips.** No economic operator offered the minimum price requested by the Olt Forestry Directorate for the yield auctioned, and so this year would be the first in which foresters would not deliver them to the market. [6] In Dolj County, southwestern Romania, corn and sunflower crops in non-irrigated areas were this year 100 % affected due to prolonged drought, and farmers were hesitant to sell plots due to falling prices in non-irrigated areas. Dolj County with its 490,000 ha of arable land was one of the most active areas in the **sale of agricultural land**, ranking third nationally in July 2025. [7] According to the League of Agricultural Producers' Associations of Romania, corn and sunflower crops were affected to up to 80–90 % in the country's south, causing **growing insolvency** among the farmers. [8] Also, **sowing of autumn crops** progressed at low pace due to drought that the country had faced in recent months. [9]

In late September, **Taut Lake** in western Romania held only 40 % of its regular water level for this time of year, due to drought that affected also its tributaries, some of which dried up. [10] The **Danube Delta**, Europe's largest wetland and one of the richest biodiversity regions, was in critical condition for the balance of the ecosystem due to increasingly long periods of drought and extreme air temperatures. In late August, the river recorded water level of just 16–17 cm, considered the lowest of historic records. In such conditions, **fish population, flora and fauna** in the area were seriously affected, migratory birds were left without food, and much of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve was in danger. Locals could no longer use their boats, dead fish lay on the banks, and many canals were no longer **navigable**. Fishermen said they have never faced such a situation before, while **tourism** was also taking a heavy hit. [11, 12, 13] The Slanic Valley in Buzau County, southeastern Romania was in early September going through an unprecedented **water crisis**, after the Ciresu Dam, its main source for several localities, dropped to less than 10 % of its capacity. For over a month, water had already been supplied on a schedule for several of its communes. [14]

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**BULGARIA**

Due to summer drought, **corn and sunflower** yields in Montana, northwestern Bulgaria were very low.

Estimates of the Montana Union of Grain Producers indicated that approximately 10 % of the corn fields completely failed, bearing no yield at all, and best yields were this year expected across approximately 1 % of the fields, bearing about 300 kg/ha, compared to the yields of 700-800 kg/ha in previous years. The sunflower harvest was also weak. [1] In nearby Vratsa and Zlatia regions, otherwise known as one of the most fertile lands in the country, drought caused up to 100 % corn yield losses, with several farmers facing bankruptcy. According to farmers, this was the worst year since 2007. [2] Due to drought also in September which set up high risk conditions, **fires** in dry grass in the north-west became more frequent in mid-September. Over the course of two days, six fires were extinguished, burning a total of about 360 acres, the Regional Directorate of the Ministry of Interior in Montana announced. [3]

By early October, the **Bistro Lake** near Smolyan dried up after unusually long periods with no rain this summer, with only the bottom of the lake seen, creating a wetland of about 5 $m^2$. [4] The level of the **Zhrebchevo dam**, the fifth largest dam in Bulgaria by volume and fourth largest by area, was in late September critically low due to prolonged drought, just under 19 %. Such situation posed a direct risk for the irrigation of agricultural lands in the Sliven and Yambol regions in eastern Bulgaria. [5] Due to drying up of water source, the village of Zlatusha in Bozhurishte Municipality near Sophia, western Bulgaria, had its **water supply interrupted** in mid-September. Sofia Region Water and Sewerage Company informed the residents there were only 8 % of water left in the reservoir. [6]

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**TURKEY**

The recent drought, persistent multi-year rainfall shortages and consequent water over-abstraction negatively impacted water resources across vast part of Turkey. As the rainfall rate declined, drought alerts were being issued in many regions. Dam occupancy rates in major cities depending on them fell below critical levels, leading to **water supply outages** of various severity, while rivers and lakes experienced severe decline in water levels or complete dry-up. It was reported that 186 out of 240 lakes have dried up completely as a result of little to no source of nourishment due to drought, the drying up of tributary rivers and the withdrawal of water. This led to **loss of natural habitats** of birds, aquatic life and other ecosystems to a greater extent, but also en-mass **wildlife deaths** at critical hotspots. [1, 2]

The flow rate of the Kizilirmak River fell to its lowest level in the last four years, compared to the October average. [3] Cinarli Reservoir, a crucial water source for **agriculture and livestock farming** in Bursa's Mudanya region, nearly completely dried up. The rapid drop in water levels led to increased **fish kills**. Fish species such as carp, catfish, and pike were starved of oxygen and washed ashore. [4] Fish deaths were observed also on the shores of Tozlu Pond, whose waters receded in the Felahiye district of Kayseri. [5] In Bafa Lake, the **largest natural lake** in the Aegean Region that provides breeding and wintering habitat for many endangered bird species, waters receded by around 40 m. [6] Drought experienced in recent years in Lake Van, Turkey's largest lake, has become a threat to the ecosystem in the region, as deep cracks and microbialites in water-retreated parts of the lake were formed on its desiccated shores. The retreat in the shallow areas where rivers flow into the eastern part of Lake Van stretched up to 2-3 km. [7, 8] Konya Plain was also experiencing a drought disaster. Turkey's second-largest lake, Lake Tuz, shrunk greatly due to drought and excessive evaporation. Home to thousands of birds, especially flamingos, the lake experienced mass **flamingo deaths**. The rapid withdrawal of groundwater leads to sinkholes and deep cracks in the surface caused by **ground subsidence**. [9] The Tersakan and Bolluk lakes in Konya region also resembled barren lands with their dried, cracked and salt-covered ground. The lakes were an important **industrial production site for minerals** but presented also an important feeding and breeding grounds for migratory birds, with its wildlife now threatened. [10] The water level in Lake Egirdir, Turkey's fourth-largest lake and second-largest **drinking water reserve**, dropped significantly, splitting the lake in two at the Hoyran Strait. Herd of animals were observed grazing on the newly formed landmass, and **fishing boats** were inoperable due to the shallow water levels. [11] The drought experienced in Lake Kovada in the Egirdir district of Isparta also threatens wildlife in the basin. [12] Also the Cavuscu Lake, a tectonically formed lake of approximately 27 km$^2$ in Konya province, visibly decreased, leaving the dried-up areas a vast wasteland. It has been drying up in recent years, with each year becoming drier than the previous one. [13] In the village of Habiller in Edirne's Havsa district, four out of five **livestock watering ponds** dried up due to drought and drying up of their small tributaries. Due to the low water level, only a small amount of land for fodder production could be supplied with water. [14] The drought experienced in Devegecidi Dam Lake in Diyarbakir also negatively affected **wildlife**. The dam lake, an important **feeding, resting and breeding ground** for birds and used also for freshwater fishing and agricultural irrigation, showed visible signs of water level decline, puddles remaining in places, migratory birds searching for food in the mud at the lake bottom, and animal herds in the region. [15]

The **Gulbahar Dam** Lake in the Agceli village of Bingol nearly completely dried up over the course of 4 months. The occupancy rate which was measured as 86 % in mid-May this year, dropped to 4 % by the beginning of October 1. As waters receded, remnants of ancient roads and structures that had been submerged years ago were resurfaced. [16, 17] The **Gelingullu Dam** largely dried up, leaving behind vast areas of cracked soil and flocks of grazing sheep were observed. [18, 19] The water level of the **Bahcelik Dam** in Kayseri fell by 60 % in comparison to June this year. As the water level dropped, islands formed in the dam, the ruins of the mosque and houses in the old village of Emegil came to light, and some fish farming cages remained dry on the ground. [20] The **Almus Dam**, crucial for **electricity generation, agricultural irrigation and fishing**, receded approximately 150 m from the shore and the rock known as Malkayası, previously only accessible by boat, could now be reached on foot. [21] The water level in the **Tahtakopru Dam**, used for irrigation purposes, dropped by 30 % due to drought, revealing some of the Ottoman heritage that had been submerged for years, such as the area where the 20-km-line of the historic Hejaz Railway was laid and the 7-meter-high piers of the railway bridge. [22] The water level at **Yuvacik Dam**, which meets most of Kocaeli's drinking water needs, dropped to 18 %, revealing one of the bridges submerged upon the dam construction. [23] Drought at the **Naip Dam** in Tekirdag area brought water levels to alarming levels. Receding waters exposed tree roots, formed small islands, soil cracks were visible in the dry areas, and parts of the land became swampy. [24, 25] **Nilufer and Doganci dams** that provide the greatest part of Bursa's drinking water, dried up completely by mid-October. The average occupancy rate, which was 2.3 % on September 28, was measured as 0.5 % on October 12 and completely dry as of October 17. [26]

Widespread drought in Bursa region dried up Bursa's several water resources, thus **water outage** was put in place in several of its districts, for several days of up to 12 hours a day. [27, 28, 29] Ten dams used to meet **Istanbul's water needs** reached alarming water levels. Although the occupancy rate at the Kazandere Dam was nearly 100 % in April, it fell to only 2.7 % in September. During the same period, the water level at Papucdere dropped from 95.5 % to 11.5 %. Even the occupancy rate at Omerli dam, Istanbul's largest dam, fell to alarming levels. [30, 31, 32] The decline in İzmir's **water resources** due to drought also reached alarming levels. The Tahtali Dam's occupancy rate, which was 17.5 % in the same period last year, fell to 3.9 % this year. The occupancy of Balcova Dam fell from 19.9 % to 6.6 %, and of Kutlu Aktas Dam, it fell from 12.5 % to 0.16 %. [33] As a result, nighttime **water cuts** were put in place for several districts of the Izmir region in early August, between 23:00 and 05:00. Water outages, which were initially in place every third day, were from early September changed to every second day and were planned to last at least until the end of October. [34, 35, 36] From mid-September, Mumcular Dam which supplies drinking and utility water to Bodrum region, could no longer provide **water supply** to the city, leading to water outages being introduced. [37]

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**Methodology**

DMCSEE Drought monitoring bulletin is prepared on the basis of climatological reanalysis, remote-sensing data and online media reports. Calculations of meteorological variables and indices (air temperature, precipitation, evapotranspiration, surface water balance, SPI, SPEI, EDDI) are based on the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) ERA5-Land monthly averaged data (https://cds.climate.copernicus.eu/datasets/reanalysis-era5-land-monthly-means?tab=overview), using 1991-2020 as a reference period. Remote-sensing product is based on the European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites (EUMETSAT) Land SAF MSG Daily Fraction of Vegetation Cover [LSA-421] product (https://lsa-saf.eumetsat.int/en/data/products/vegetation/#FVC), presented for the confirmed locations, using long-term averages from 2004 to the last full calendar year (currently up to and including 2024). Information on drought impacts is obtained from freely available online reports of national authorities and media newspapers.