



ECO-SCHEMES, ORGANIC FARMING AND GAEC UNDER CAP 2023–2027: ROMANIA'S GREEN TRANSITION

**Gabriel Suster^{1,2,*}, Diana Marin¹, Tabita Adamov¹, Miroslav Raicov²,
Marius Lungu¹**

¹University of Life Sciences „King Mihai I” from Timisoara, Faculty of Management and Rural Tourism

²Romanian Academy-Timisoara Branch, Research Centre for Sustainable Rural Development of Romania

Corresponding author: gabriel.suster@usvt.ro

Abstract: *This paper analyses the environmental architecture of the 2023–2027 Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)—specifically eco-schemes, organic farming support, and Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions (GAEC) conditionality—with a focus on Romania. Although Romania is formally aligned with this framework, implementation is hampered by low organic uptake, fragmented small farms, and limited advisory capacity. The study concludes that effective environmental transition depends on financial support combined with administrative simplification, stronger technical assistance, and realistic pathways for small and medium-sized farms.*

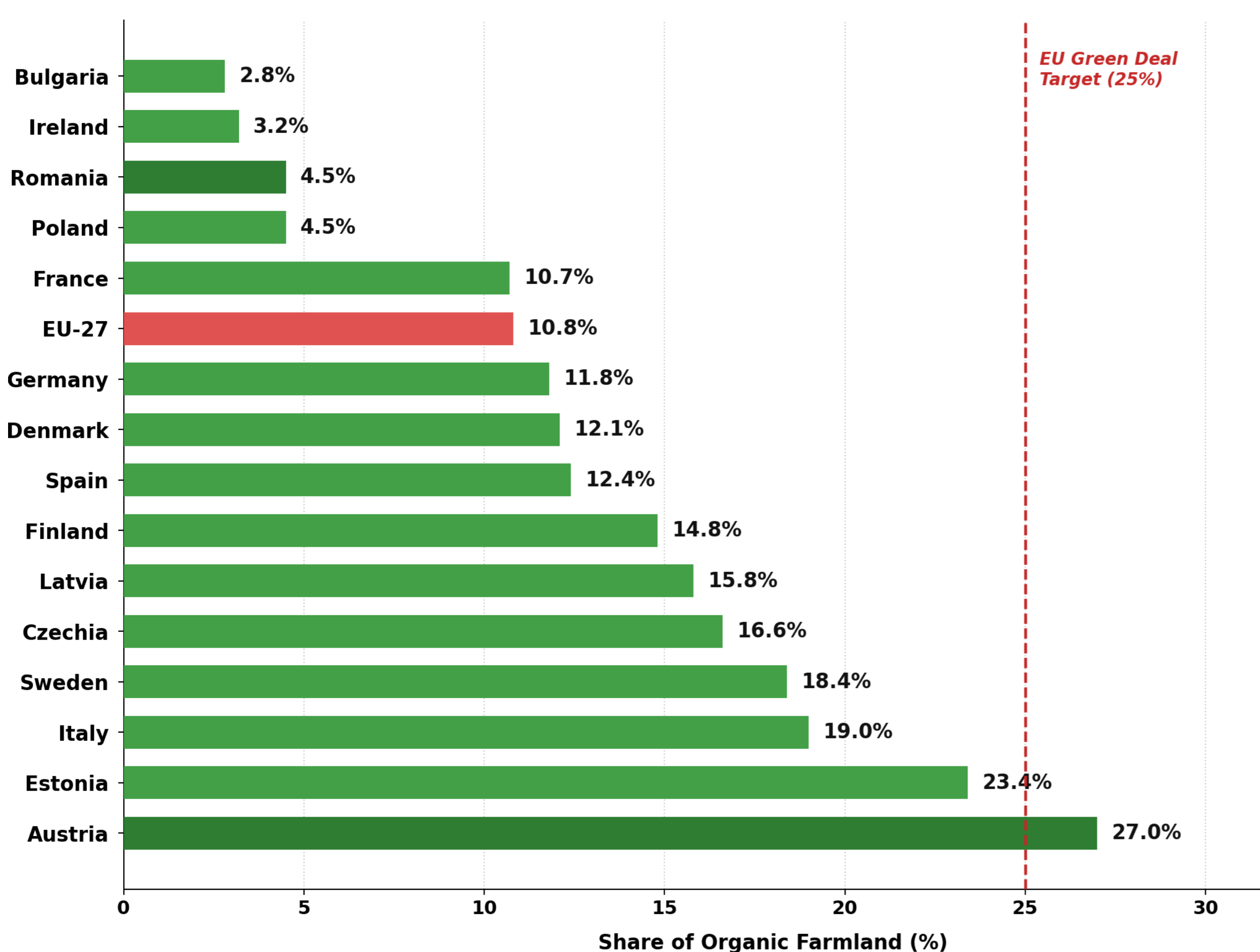
• Introduction

The 2023–2027 CAP reform strengthens the environmental focus of EU agricultural policy through a green architecture combining conditionality, eco-schemes, and rural-development measures. Romania enters this cycle with a difficult farm structure: ASA 2023 reports 2.859 million holdings farming 12.55 million ha, with an average size of 4.39 ha, while farms below 1 ha account for 53.6% of all holdings. This high fragmentation limits farmers' ability to meet the administrative and technical demands of the CAP's green architecture, in relation to the socio-economic realities of Romanian agriculture.

• Material and method

The study uses a comparative descriptive approach based on the European Commission summary of the 28 approved CAP Strategic Plans, the Romania CAP Strategic Plan factsheet, ASA 2023 data, and recent literature on eco-schemes and environmental measures. Methodological interpretation of Romanian land-use variables follows the ASA 2023 operator manual.

Figure 1. Organic area share in UAA, 2023**



• Results and discussions

Eco-schemes are an important incentive, but access is uneven in a farm system dominated by small holdings. Romania allocates a substantial budget to eco-schemes, yet implementation may face stronger constraints than in many Western Member States because Romanian farms generally have weaker advisory, administrative and technical support. Organic farming also remains well below the EU average, mainly due to fragile certification systems, advisory services, and market demand. GAEC conditionality offers a coherent baseline, but compliance burdens are harder to absorb in fragmented, low-productivity agriculture.

The analysis focuses on organic farming shares and interprets them in relation to eco-scheme budgets, GAEC conditionality and structural indicators relevant to Romania's green transition.

• Conclusions

Romania has entered the 2023–2027 CAP period with the formal instruments needed for environmental transition, but their effectiveness is still constrained by structural weaknesses. Effective green transition requires three parallel actions: simpler implementation, stronger advisory and extension systems, and better market support for sustainable products. Without these conditions, the CAP's environmental architecture risks improving formal compliance while delivering only limited structural change, even though Romania combines high structural fragmentation with considerable ecological potential.

**Source: Eurostat / European Environment Agency, 2023 data.