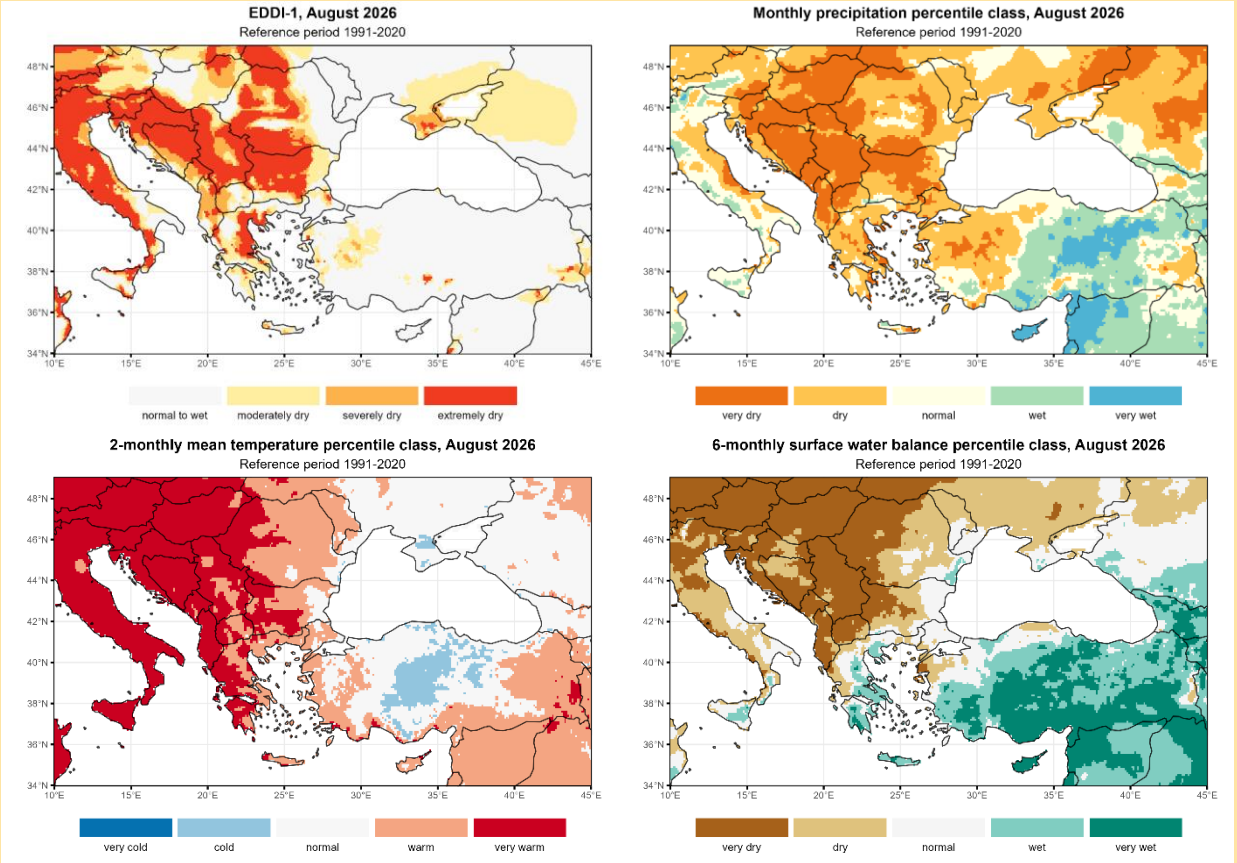
DROUGHT MONITORING BULLETIN

August 2026

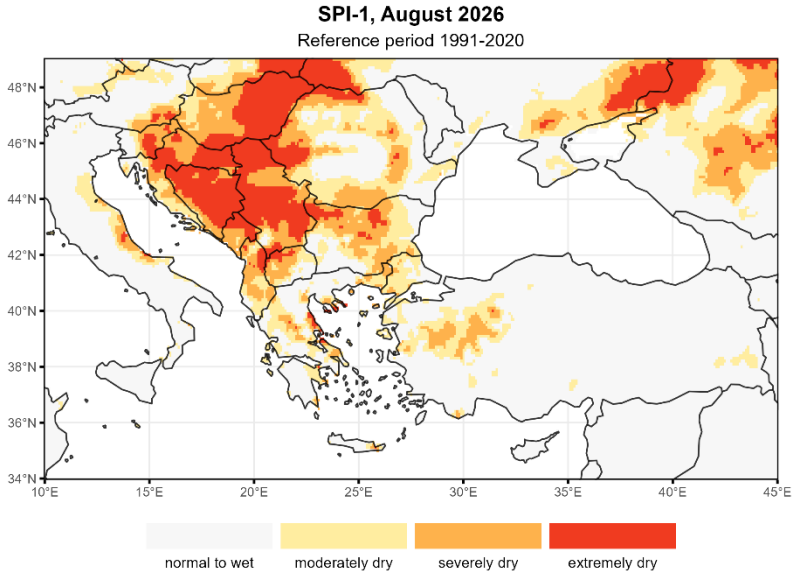
HOT SPOT

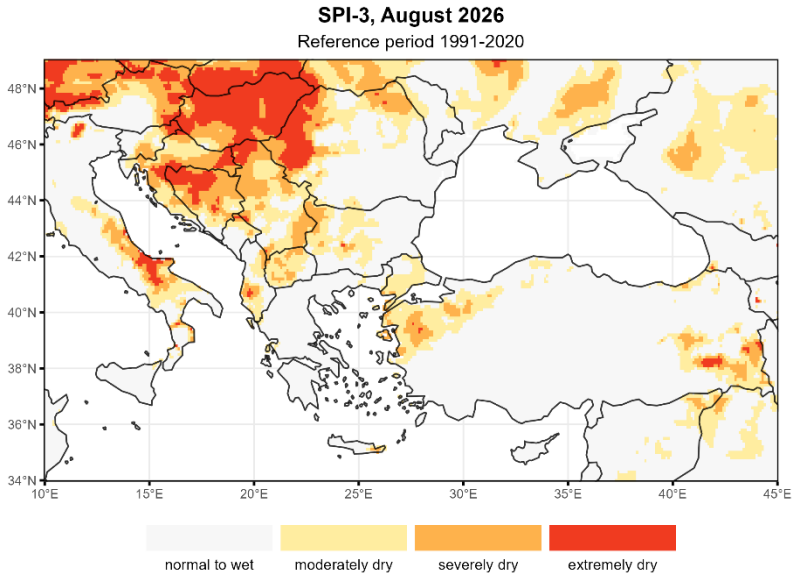


- Over most of the Balkan Peninsula, especially its western half, August proved both well warmer and well drier than normal. Due to abnormally high air temperatures that on monthly average exceeded the long-term for at least up to 3 °C, locally up to 5 °C, this part of Balkan Peninsula recorded extreme evaporative demand, resulting in up to 30 mm greater than normal amount of water evaporated potentially this August, locally over the Bulgaria-Romania border up to 45 mm more.
- Overlapping with high air temperatures, but with greater spatial extent was the area experiencing rainfall deficit. Over approximately half of the Balkan Peninsula, August was the first or second driest August in the 30-year record between 1991-2020.
- Of the summer months this year, August recorded the greatest extent of both extreme evaporation demand and extremely dry conditions, which also mostly overlapped and thus reinforced drought.
- Over the northwestern half of Balkan Peninsula, dry or very dry surface water balance levels indicating considerable monthly deficit prevailed since March, over continental Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina since April, with only occasional months in which surface water balance was average.
- The area encompassing Hungary, northern Serbia and far western Romania, recorded three out of six months within the last 6-monthly period, namely April, July and August, with abnormally high surface water balance deficit that ranked as the driest or second driest in the 1991-2020 period.

PRECIPITATION CONDITIONS

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.



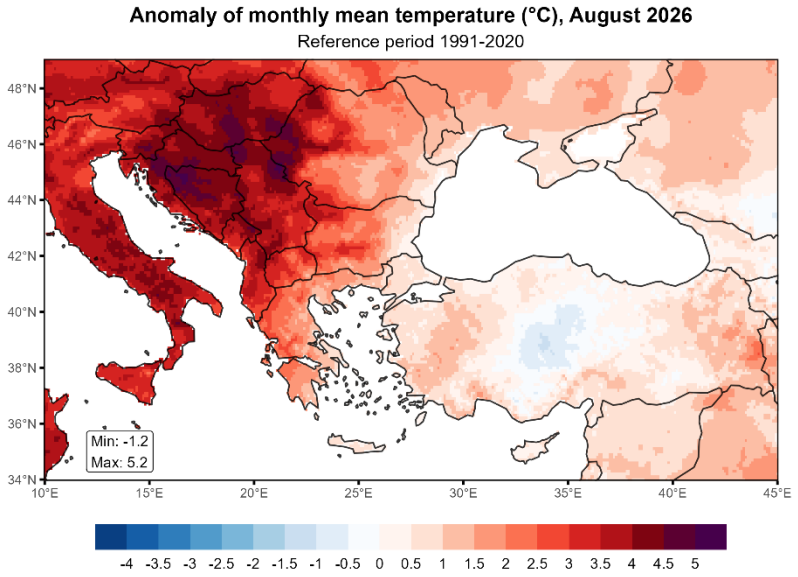


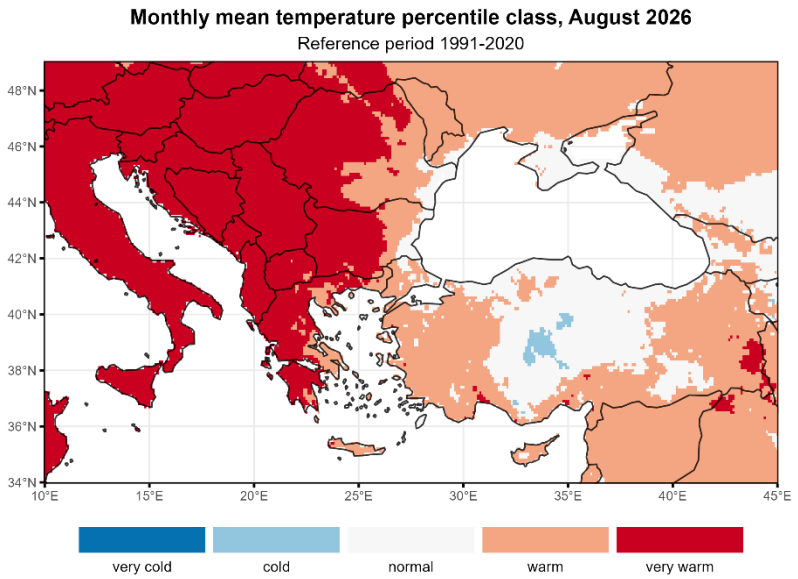
- Most of Turkey received more or less average amount of rain for August, but the entire Balkan Peninsula as far south as central Greece recorded dry August, with highest monthly rainfall deficit situated over its wider centre and the north.
- Southern and eastern parts of Balkan Peninsula received up to 50 mm lesser amount of rain this month, wider northwestern quarter up to 75 mm less and locally in Slovenia, continental Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Romania and Montenegro deficit reached up to 100 mm.
- Over much of Balkan Peninsula between Slovenia, Hungary and Albania as well as over wider Bulgaria-Romania border area, such monthly deficit ranked as one of the highest in the long-term records for August.
- Receiving greater than normal amount of rain was limited to far northwestern Turkey, with up to 50 mm of precipitation surplus, locally up to 75 mm.

- The 3-monthly overview of precipitation conditions reveals considerable lack of rain over the area between Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina and western Romania. They received between 125 and 200 mm lesser amount of rain than normally, locally up to 250 mm less, much of it on the account of very dry July and August, which indicated extremely dry summer months this year.
- The rest of the western Balkan Peninsula between Croatia, Serbia and Northern Macedonia, and northeastern Romania were 100–150 mm short of their usual rainfall amount, most of it recorded during August, which ranked this year's summer as severely dry over these parts of the region.

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 **August 2026** in comparison to the 1991-2020 reference datasets. A percentile value (class) indicates the position of a score within an ordered dataset, showing the percentage of scores that fall below (within) it. The two extreme percentile classes have a 5-percent range, and each of the middle three classes has a 30-percent range.



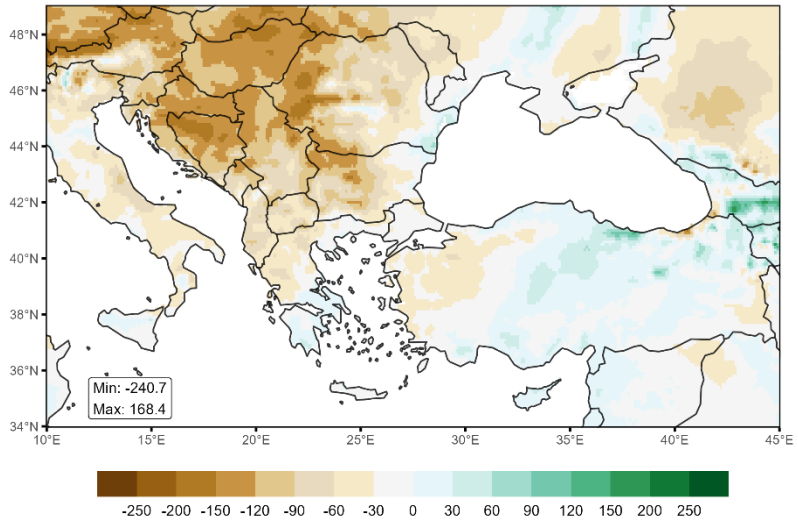


- In central Turkey, August was on average up to 1.5 °C colder than usual, and over wider central third of the country mean air temperature ranged about the average for August.
- On the other hand, Turkey's western and eastern third of the country experienced up to 1.5 °C, locally up to 2 °C warmer than normal August, similarly as in coastal areas of the Aegean Ses and along the far eastern Balkan Peninsula from Moldova to Turkey.
- Over the rest of the region, August was abnormally hot and one of the warmest in the local 30-year records. Monthly mean was at least 2.5 °C above the long-term average, with the centre of the heat situated between northern Albania, northwestern Romania and Slovenia, where August mean exceeded the average by up to 4.5 °C, locally in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, southern Hungary, Serbia and western Romania by up to 5 °C.

- Consequently, evaporative demand this August reached extreme values in a wide belt from Slovenia to central Bulgaria, and locally in northwestern Romania, northern Hungary, Albania and central Greece, reflected in one of the highest recorded potential evaporation levels. On monthly basis, up to 30 mm, locally up to 45 mm more water potentially evaporated, than normal in August.

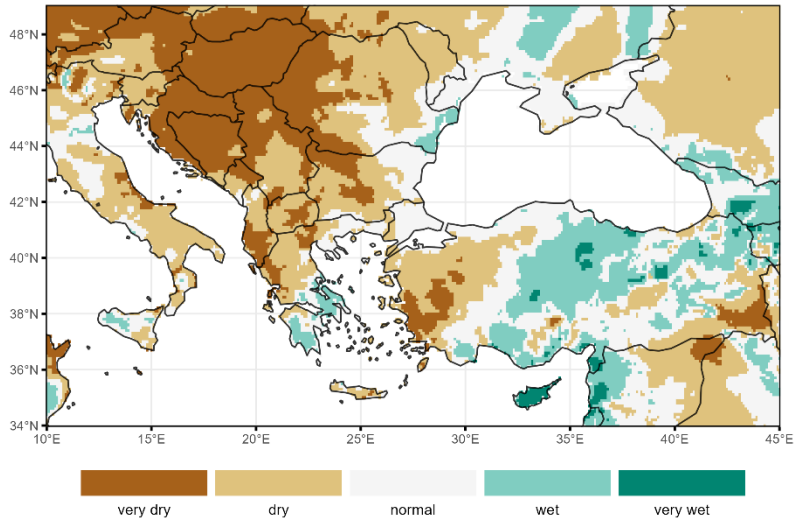
Anomaly of 2-monthly surface water balance (mm), August 2026

Reference period 1991-2020



2-monthly surface water balance percentile class, August 2026

Reference period 1991-2020



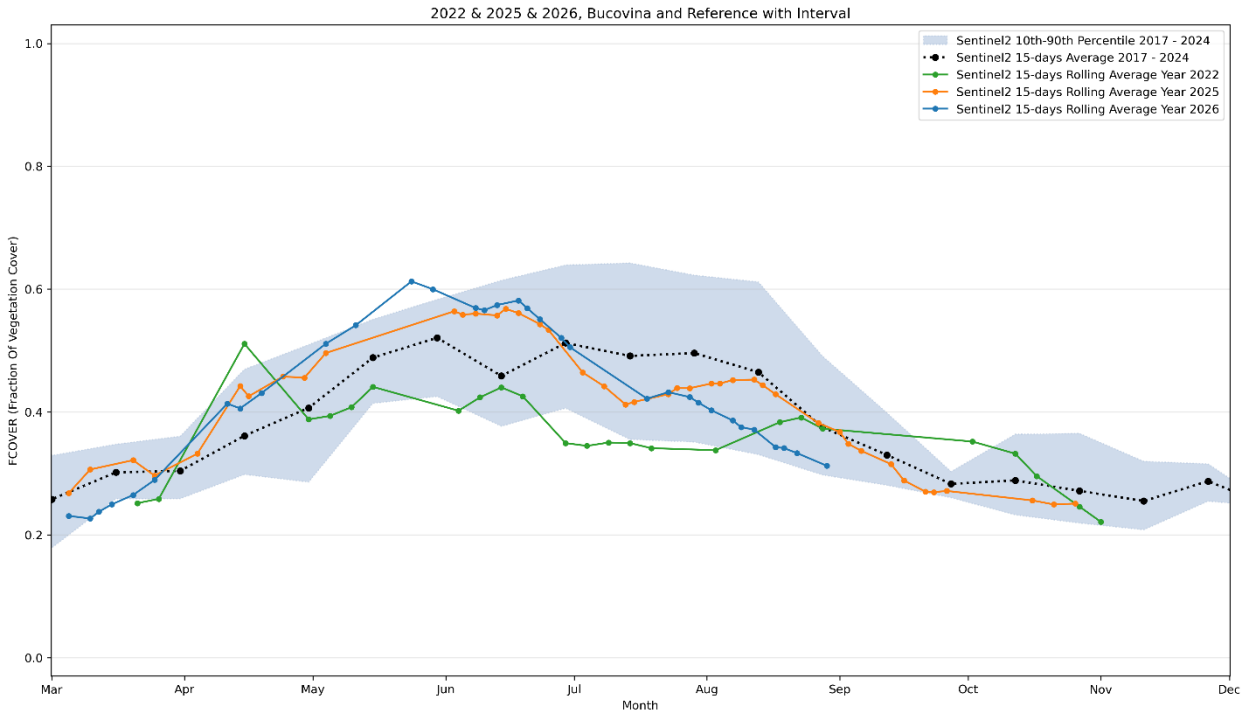
- Turkey and coastal areas between southern Greece and Moldova ended the July-August period either in average surface water balance levels or in deficit of mostly less than 60 mm. For the latter, this came mainly on the account of surplus recorded in July, since surface water balance was in August deficient over the entire Balkan Peninsula.
- Across the rest of the southern Balkan Peninsula, up to Montenegro, and over central Romania, surface water balance deficit of both July and August accumulated to 60–120 mm.
- Surface water balance was during July and August deficient also across the rest of the Balkan Peninsula, though due to its very dry levels in August and over Hungary also in July, this part of the region recorded up to 150 mm, locally up to 200 mm of the accumulated deficit during the 2-monthly period.

VEGETATION DEVELOPMENT

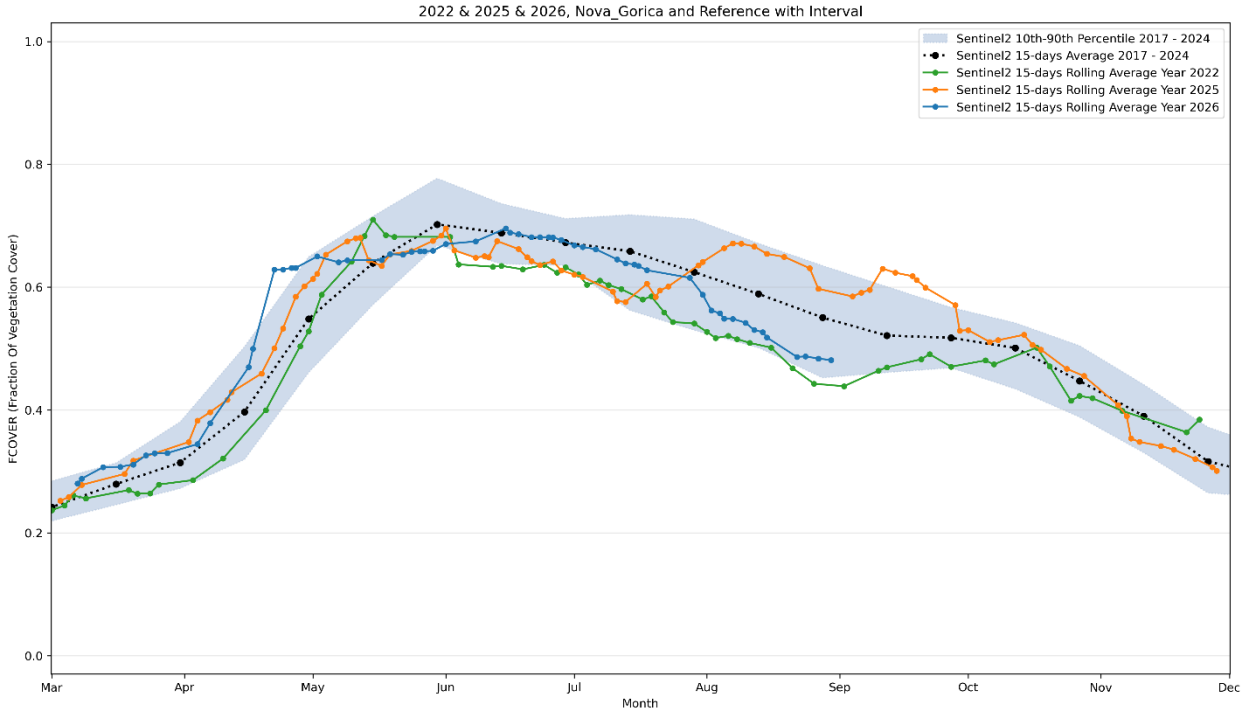
Fraction of green vegetation cover (FCOVER) *is a vegetation index based on remote sensing (satellite) measurements and shows fraction of the total pixel area covered by green vegetation. As such, it has in combination with atmospheric parameters proved useful also for drought monitoring. Values vary 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** according to FCOVER index, as recorded **on 31 August 2026** at selected locations across southeastern Europe. Current year's values are presented in blue line, alongside the lines for the previous year (orange), year 2022 (green) and the reference background (recent years' average in black line, the 10th–90th percentile range in grey field) 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



SLOVENIA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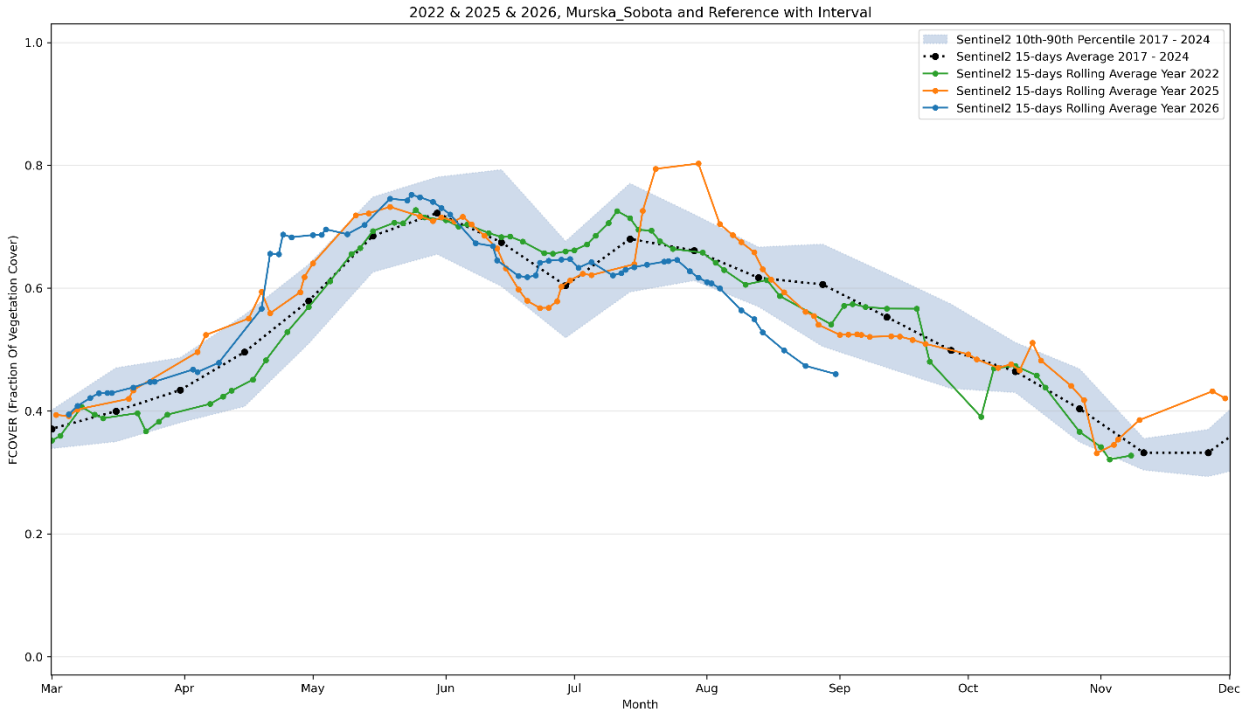
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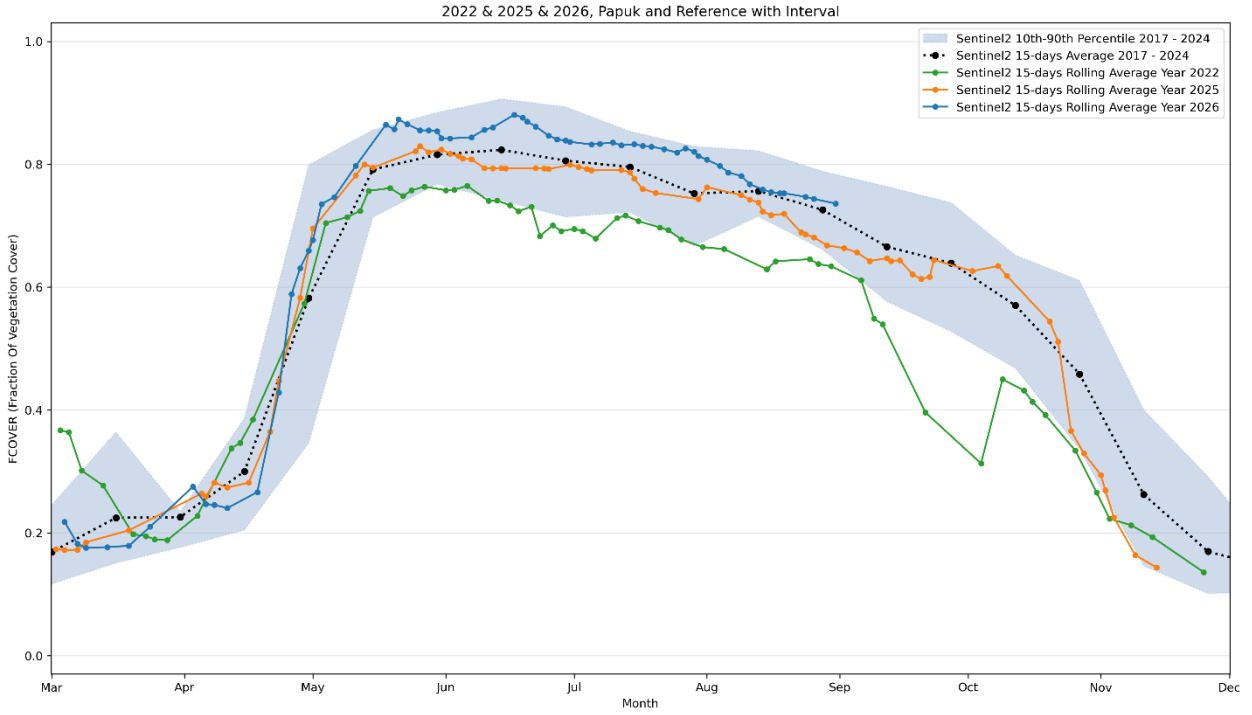
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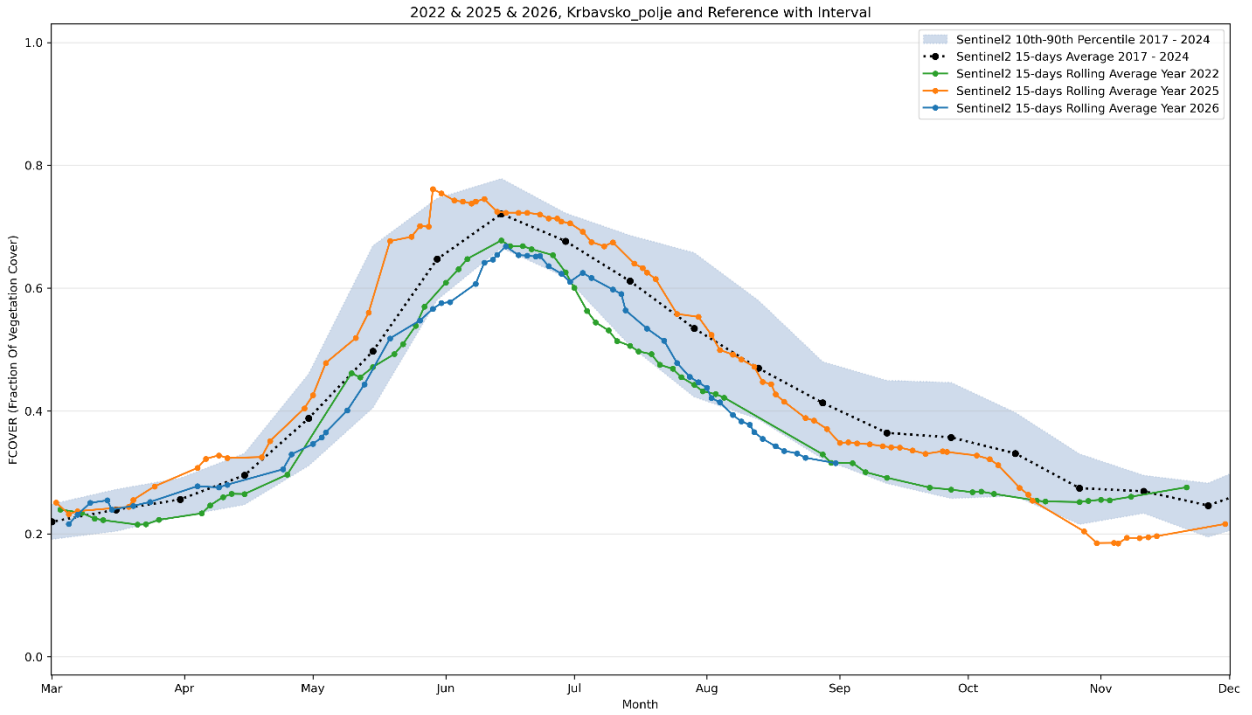
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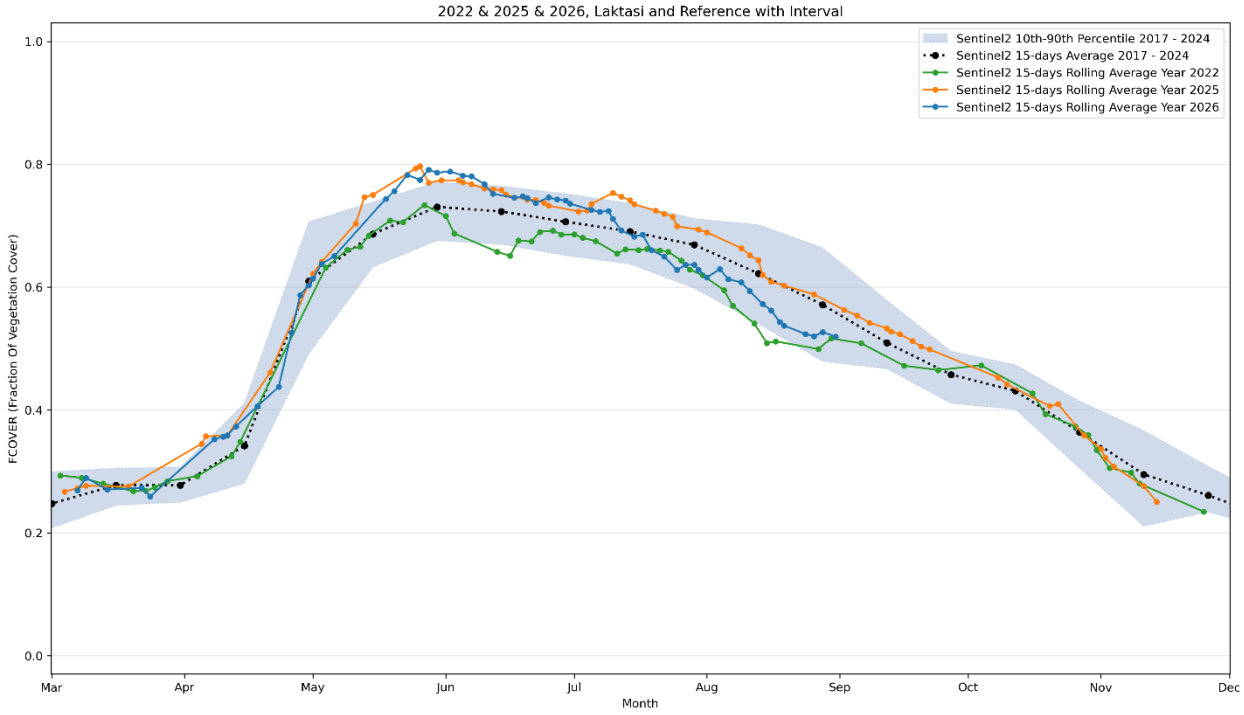
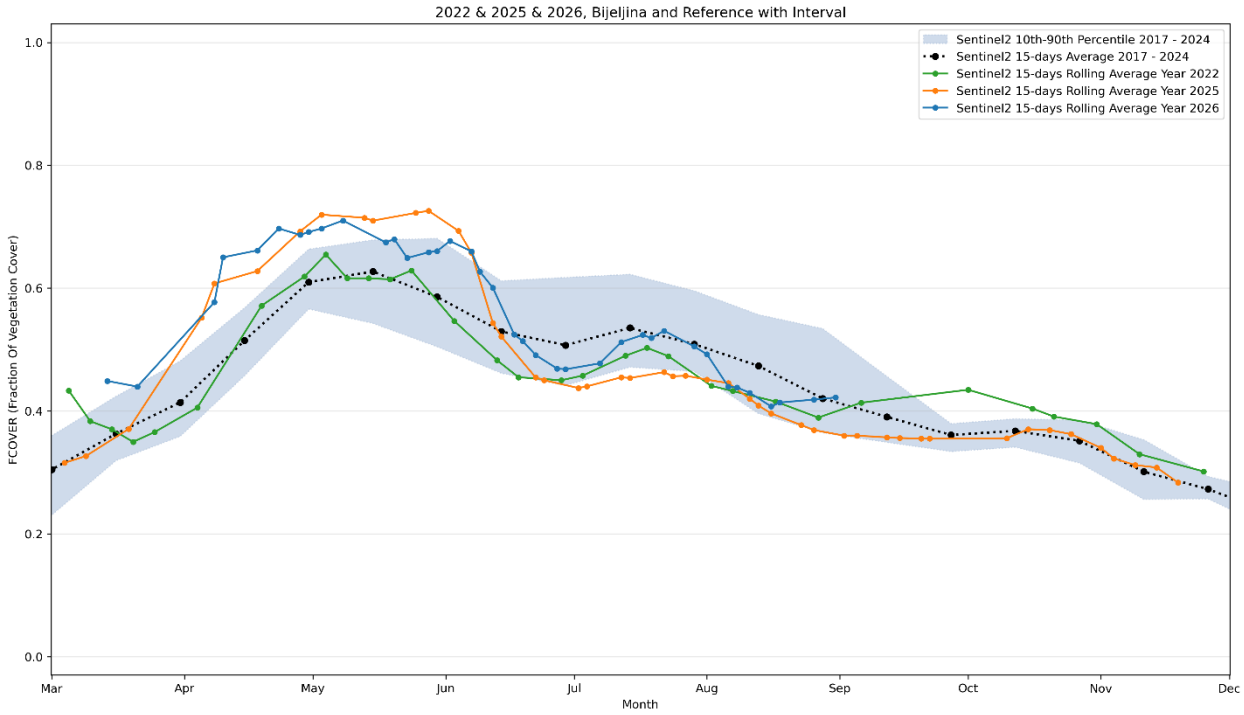
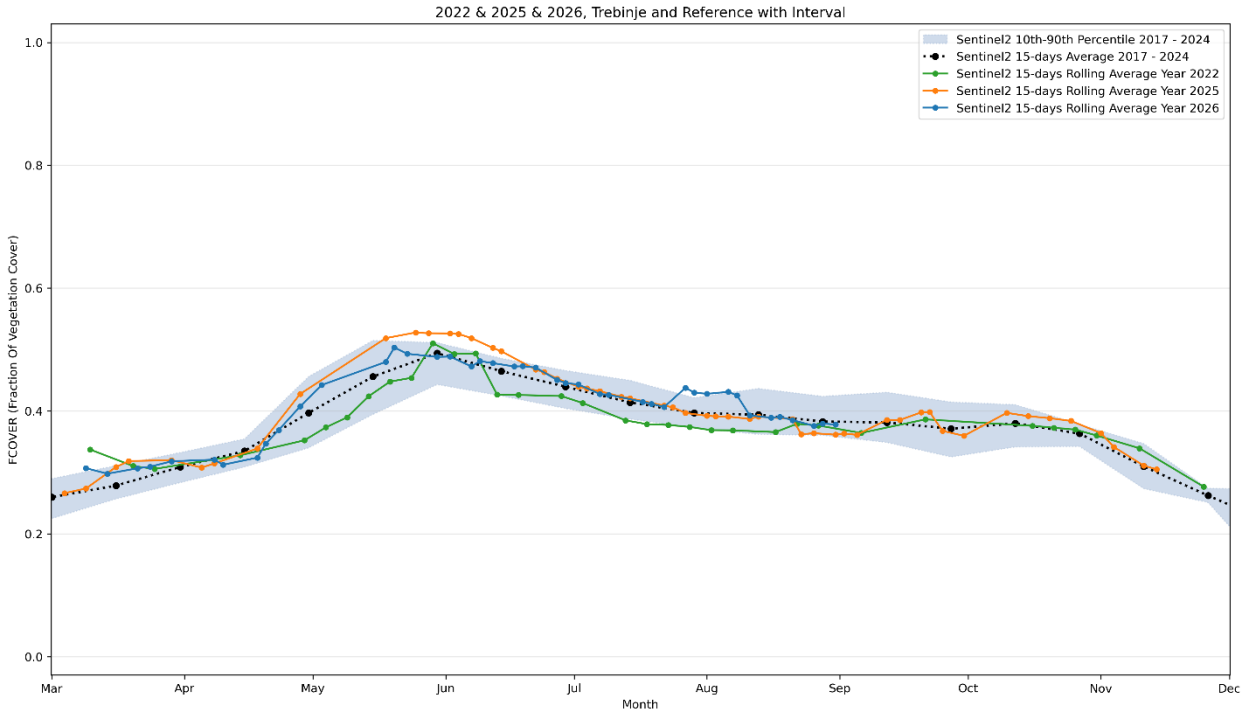
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA (REPUBLIC OF SRPSKA)



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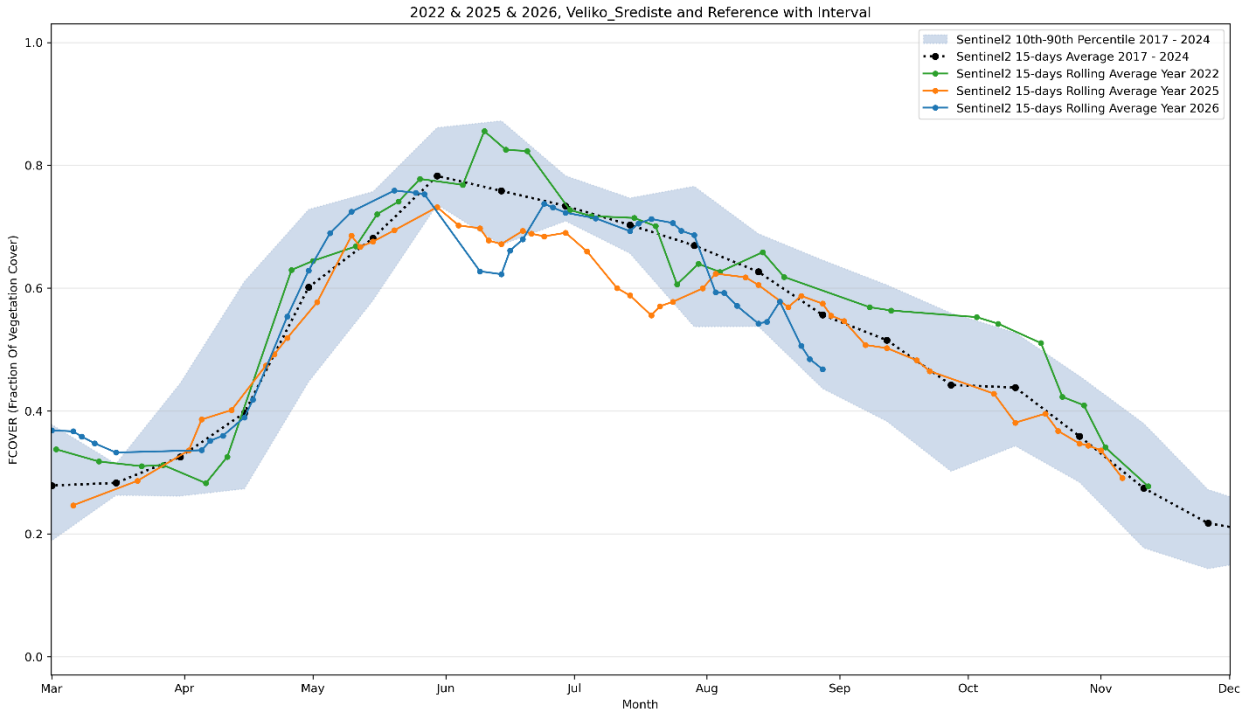
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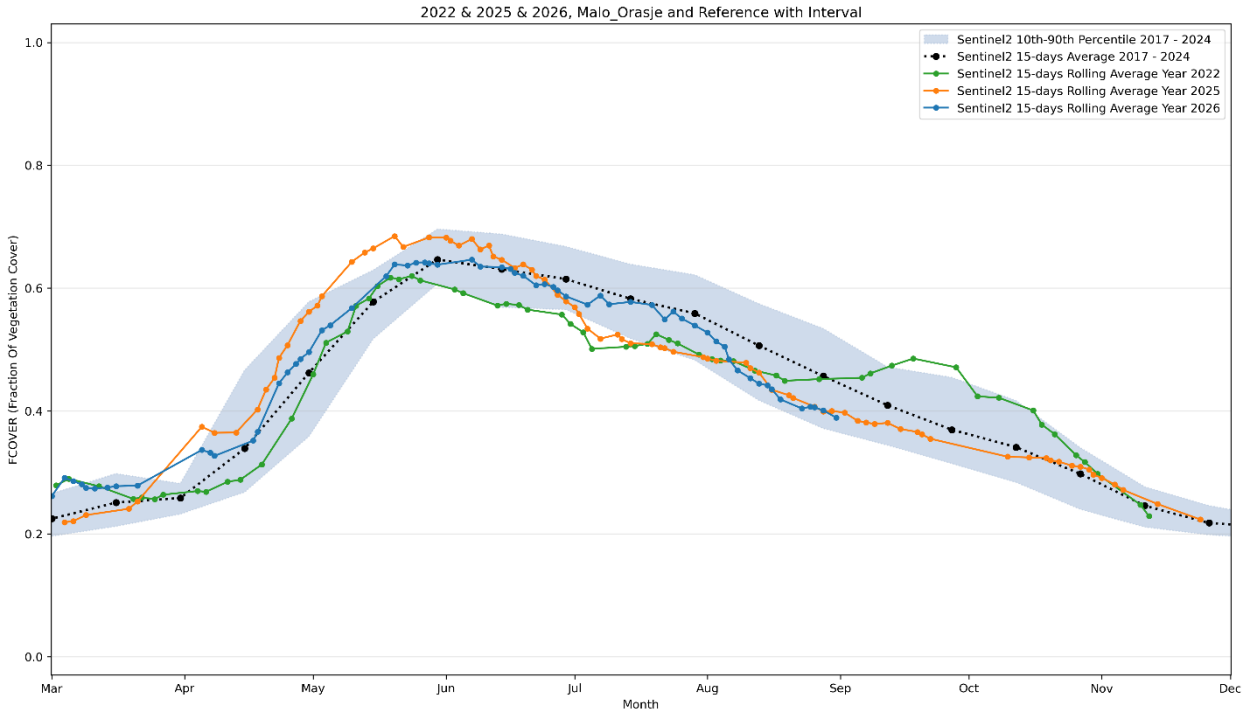
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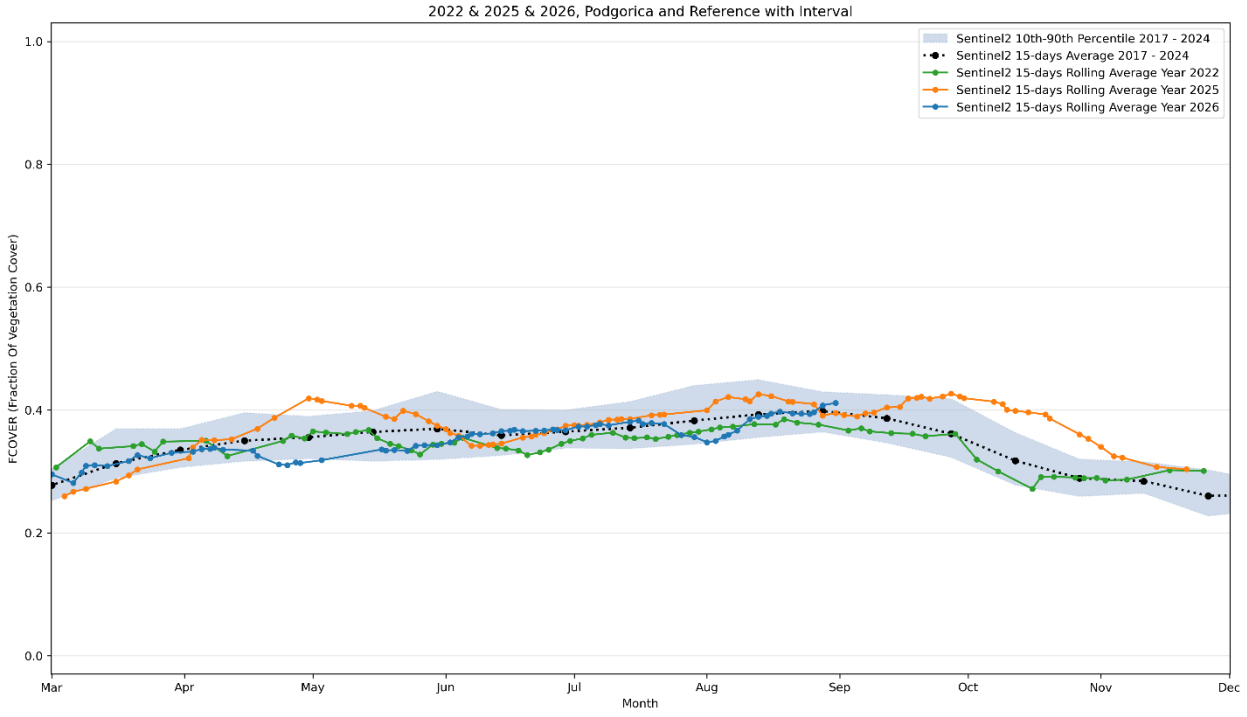
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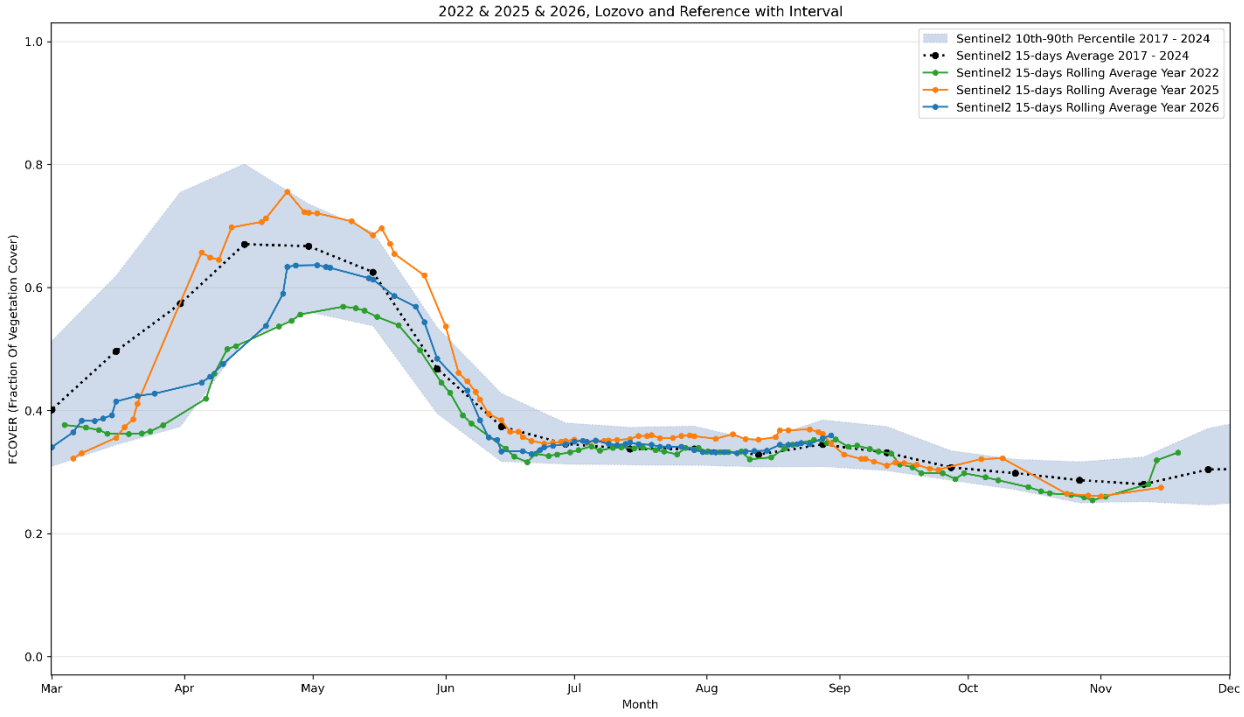
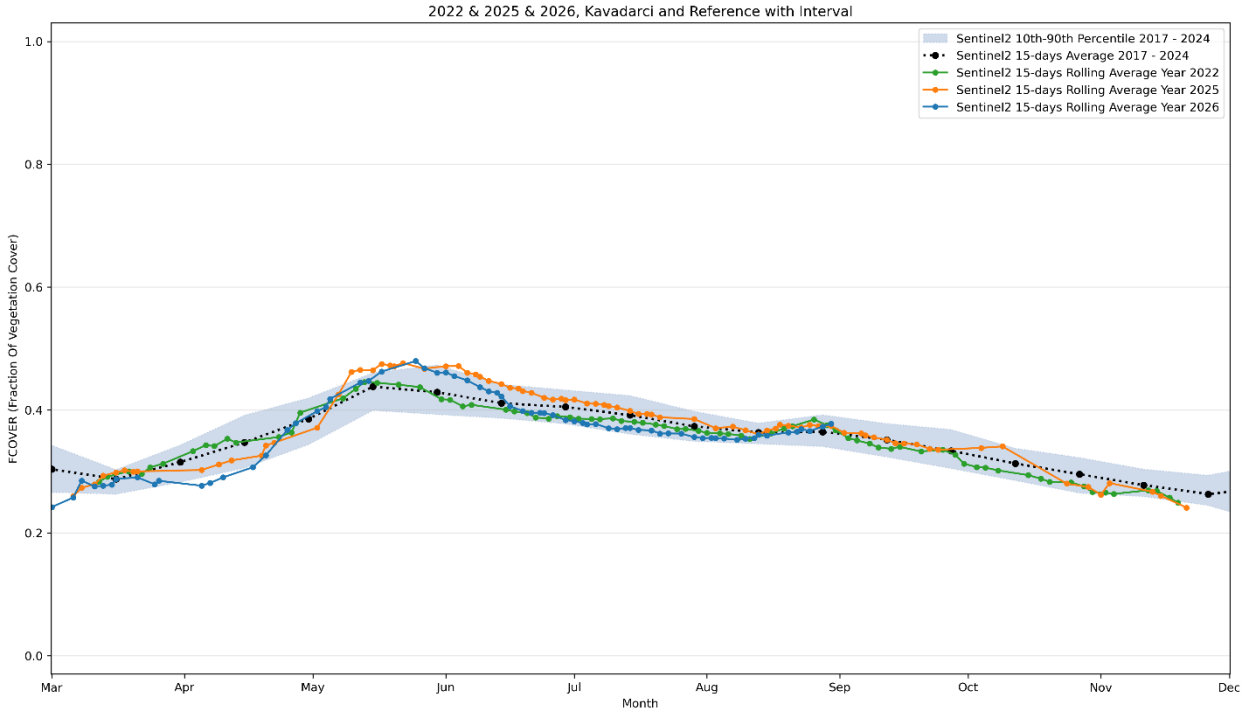
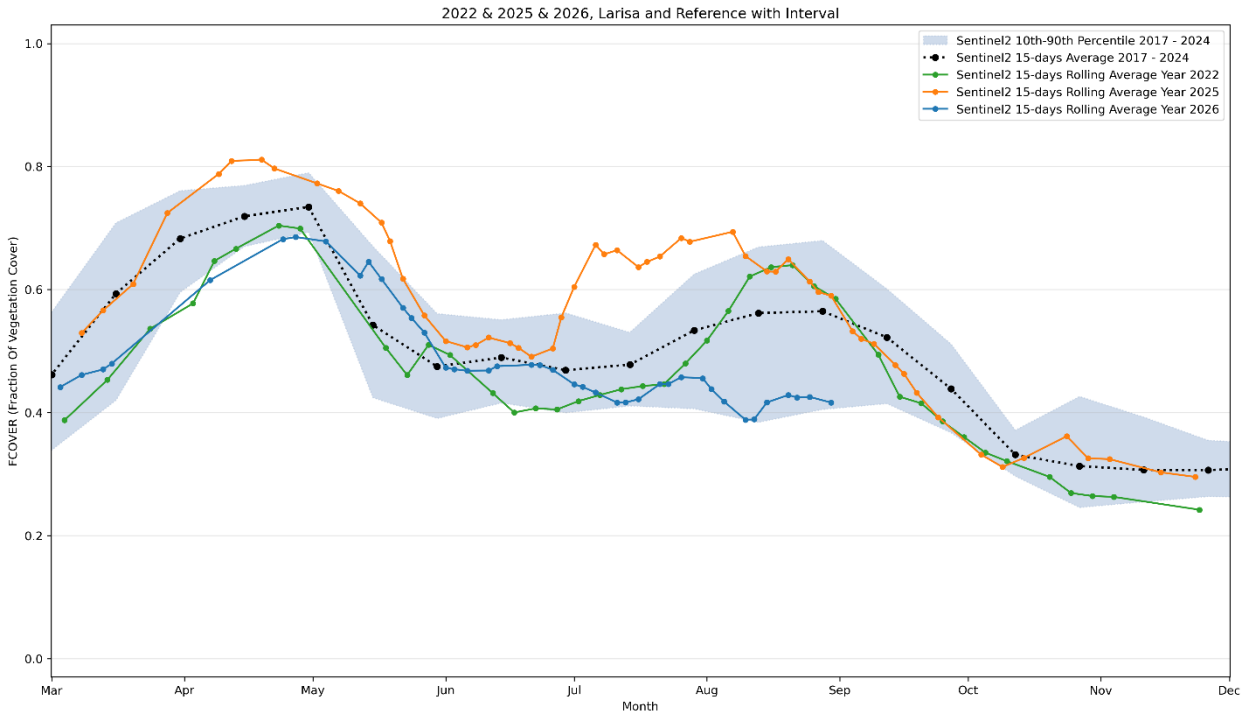




GREECE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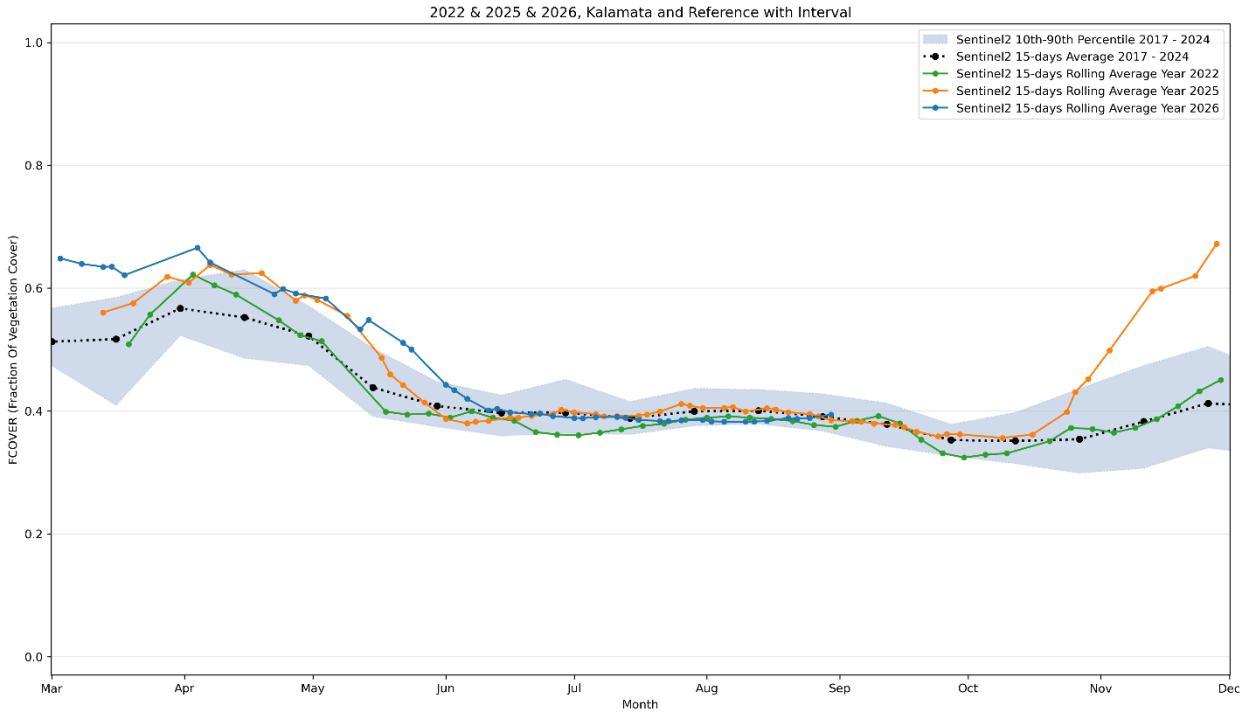
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DROUGHT IMPACT REPORTS

HUNGARY

Drought in Hungary continued to intensify in August, and agriculture was faced with extreme crop losses, pushing farmers on the brick of extinction. [1, 2] Only in the southwestern part of Transdanubia, southwestern Hungary were conditions somewhat favourable, while elsewhere the drought that has been on-going almost continuously since the beginning of the vegetation season has caused irreversible damage. [3] **Corn** and even more stress-tolerant **sunflower** experienced forced ripening, and on field without irrigation the vegetation practically dried out completely. Harvest began much earlier than usual and showed an extremely poor yield average. The worst corn harvest of all time was expected. [4, 5] Harvest of **animal feed**, namely hay, straw, alfalfa, and corn was so scarce that many livestock farmers were forced to use up their **winter feed reserves** months earlier. Drought left the animals with nothing to eat or drink in many places, thus dry pastures, poor yields and soaring prices were forcing farmers to **reduce their herds**. Significant losses in **dairy production** were expected this year. [6, 7]
The **prices** of many fruits were expected to rise as this year's harvest has been in many places completely destroyed by drought and altogether much smaller than usual quantities were available. The most affected of fruits were **apple**, **sour cherry** and **plum** plantations, with significant losses expected also in **vegetable** production. Yellowing and drying of **fig** leaves were reported, as well as the wilting and falling of the fruit. The weather damage so far this year, namely frost and drought, was in vegetable and fruit sector estimated at 100–150 billion Hungarian forints. [8, 9]
Drought damage has by mid-August been reported on 770,000 ha across the country, based on 31,000 reports received, while reporting window was still open and numbers were not final. However, the collected numbers are still significantly higher than the total drought damage reported in 2022, which in Hungary was labelled the drought of the century. [10] To preserve the solvency of agriculture, the government helped farmers struggling with severe drought damage by ensuring advance **financial intervention** of 106 billion forints, which was also supplemented by funds drawn from the EU crisis fund. [11, 12, 13]

In Hungary, this year's drought has had a strong hydrological component as well, affecting also **ecosystems**, drinking water supplies and **energy production** in several settlements. According to the Hungaromet, Pest Country, central Hungary and Hajdu-Bihar County, eastern Hungary recorded worst weather statistics this year, with both registering more than 120 drought days this year. [4] Due to extreme heat and drought, natural sources of nectar and pollen have practically disappeared in a significant part of the country since the end of July. About 80 % of the Hungarian **bee population** had little or no access to natural pollen for weeks. The situation was further aggravated by drying up of the wetter areas and shores that in other years provided food for bees in the second half of the summer. [14] Drought caused extensive damage to Hungarian **fish production**, with the impact expected to be felt next year due to the carp production cycle. New reports of fishponds drying up were in on a regular basis, but it was not yet known exactly how many tons of fish have died in Hungary this year. Especially in Transdanubia, central Hungary, lakes and ponds were particularly vulnerable this year as several reservoirs were unable to fill up properly during the winter and persistent sunshine, high temperatures and dry, warm winds during spring and summer created extremely high evaporation losses. [15, 16]

The summer drought and heatwave reduced the average water level of **Lake Balaton**, western Hungary to just over 40 cm in late August, which was far below the long-term average of 86 cm and could thus be lacking about 240 million m^3 of water. The average water level of the lake was in mid-June about 77 cm. [17, 18] The water level of **Lake Velencei**, central Hungary fell to a historic low, with the Agard water gauge measuring just 20 cm of water in mid-August. This is well below the previous negative record of 53 cm registered during the severe drought year 2022. [19] Due to months of drought, the water level of **Lake Tisza**,

eastern Hungary dropped to a critical level. Water level was in mid-August more than a meter lower than its average summer level, breaking also the lowest summer water level of year 2022. **Boat, fishing and water tour traffic** was becoming impossible in more and more places. The usable water resources of Lake Tisza have essentially run out, as the Central Tisza Region Water Management Directorate announced, and extraordinary measures were taken to protect the remaining water resources and ensure drinking water supply to Szolnok population. [20] The water level of **Danube River** was throughout August so low in some sections of the river that it was possible to cross it on foot. In Budapest, its water level dropped to 14-19 cm by early August, and the historic low river water level brought to the surface brought to the surface war wreckages, bombs, and a variety of **archaeologic finds** that had previously been submerged. [21, 22] For **river transport**, Danube was in some sections not passable at all or cargo ships could only carry significantly less cargo, so a significant amount of goods has been **transferred to road transport**. [23, 24]

The low water level of the Danube River made the operation of the Paks Nuclear **Power Plant** difficult due to insufficient amount of cooler river water amount, while due to extremely low Tisza River water level the operation of the Tiszalok Dam hydroelectric **power plant** had to be stopped in late August. [25, 26]

Due to the critical drop in the water level of the Tisza River and its tributaries, the Koros-Videki Water Directorate introduced immediate and **indefinite water supply restrictions** from mid-August onward. As a result, agricultural irrigation, extraordinary water demands and even ecological water withdrawals were drastically cut back in order to give priority to ensuring drinking water for the population. [27] In Szentendre, northern Hungary, the **drinking water supply** was also disrupted, and there was a period when four to five thousand households were left without piped water, so 25 tons of drinking water had to be distributed, and on the most severe days, around a hundred emergency calls were received. [21] During heat and extreme drought, Budapest also introduced **energy and water saving measures**. Energy consumption was limited in public transport and in companies in the capital, in addition, trees in the capital received more economical irrigation and the capital's decorative lighting was temporarily turned off, along with the fountains and the Gellert Hill waterfall. [28]

In late August, the Hungarian government also adopted an action plan on sustainable water management, which aimed to increase the efficiency of water use in all relevant sectors through nature-based solutions and natural water retention measures. [29]

SLOVENIA

High temperatures and lack of precipitation in the environment caused serious consequences across the entire country. Drought was prevailing in fields and gardens, in some places **drying up of treetops** occurred, and an increased number of river and lake beds were becoming empty. According to the first estimates by the Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry Slovenia, most affected were **meadows, arable land, fodder plants, corn, potatoes, vegetables and other crops**. In such extreme weather conditions, not even irrigation helped save the yield as it was still reduced by half at least, and even agrotechnical measures rarely helped. Depending on the type of soil, grain harvest was reduced by 40–90 %, at several places even up to 100 %, putting under **question the survival** of many producers and their families. [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6] Yield of corn, sunflowers, soybeans and pumpkins on gravelly soils would be practically lost this year. In all other areas, the harvest was expected to be reduced by at least 50 %. The situation was similar with **vegetables**, for example carrots, cabbage, broccoli and tomatoes. [7, 8]

In Posavje, eastern Slovenia, **fruit trees** in non-irrigated orchards were drying out, while in irrigated orchards, the consequences of heat were still visible on fruits, as many fruits were scorched or smaller in size. [9] At record air temperatures and lasting heat, even irrigation could not prevent damage to the fruit, including **olive trees** otherwise considered one of the most enduring Mediterranean plants. Only those who

started irrigating olive plantains in May might have escaped the worst regarding the yield as well as tree vitality. [10] Similar scenario was observed for wine growers, as those without irrigation or under the prohibited use of it recorded extensive damage to the quality and quantity of **grapes,** thus expect poorer wine quality. In Karst area, Littoral Slovenia, much damage to the vineyards was caused also by **invading wild boars and badgers** upon the lack of food and water. [11] Prolonged period of drought and intense heat affected many **young vineyards** and led to about three weeks **earlier harvest**. Vineyards in Dolenjska, Bela Krajina and Posavje regions in eastern and southeastern Slovenia were expected to suffer a yield loss of up to 40 %. [12] In Istria region, Littoral Slovenia, harvest was expected to be reduced at least by half, mostly due to water shortages. [13]

Prolonged heat and drought were increasingly affecting wildlife and forests. The consequences were visible throughout the **ecosystem** – from insects and amphibians to fish and larger **wild animals**, as heat and lack of water put them under severe physiological stress. Wild animals were leaving their usual habitats and moving closer to settlements due to a lack of water and drying up of food sources. They were losing their general vitality, some have even died or had health problems. [14, 15] **Wasps** were also observed to increasingly flying around houses, terraces and balconies, as they were primarily looking for water. [16] **Forest** trees were drying out en-masse, their leaves falling off like in autumn. Experts warn that some trees would likely not recover from the damage in the next growing season, and such conditions are very suitable for the spread of bark beetles. [17]

The warming of the water bodies and **low water levels** were increasing the risk of fish deaths. Fishing was banned in several ponds and river sections across Slovenia, especially in regions of Bela Krajina in southeastern Slovenia, Savinjska in eastern Slovenia, and Pomurje in northeastern Slovenia. [18, 19, 20] In Savinja River and its tributaries but also in fish farming, drought decimated **fish population**, especially trout, grayling and rudd. [21] In Ljubljanica River, central Slovenia, such low water level endangering fish population has not been observed in the last 25 years. [22] Influenced by high summer temperatures and very low water levels in Sava Rivers this year, **decaying sludge** began accumulating and polluting the water surface at the confluence of rivers Sava Dolinka and Sava Bohinjka, northwestern Slovenia. [23] The Soca River completely dried up at its confluence with Vipava River near the Italian-Slovenian border. [24]

Due to long-lasting dry and hot weather this summer, sea salt miners in Secovlje Soline company were expecting longer harvesting season and an increased **sea salt yield** this year. [25]

Several water supply companies experienced shortages of all **drinking water resources**. They had to prohibit the use of drinking water for non-essential purposes and activate civil protection mechanisms to deliver drinking water to the inhabitants. Mostly affected in that sense were municipalities in Podravje, Savinjska and Dolenjska regions, all in eastern part of the country. [26, 27, 28, 29] As a result of greatly reduced availability of water resources, several irrigation systems in the Lower Savinjska valley could no longer be used, affecting more than 900 ha of land. [30] Water resource situation exacerbated to the point the Ministry of the Environment calling for measures to be taken to reduce the negative impacts of the drought regarding households as well as **industrial water consumption and irrigation** in agriculture. [31]

CROATIA

In August, dry conditions prevailed across almost the entire lowland part of Croatia, as well as in central and southern Dalmatia. [1] Very dry conditions were also recorded in eastern Croatia. According to the SPI and SPEI indices, extreme drought conditions were recorded in Slavonia, the wider Zagreb area and central Dalmatia on timescales of one to three months. [2, 3] Extremely high air temperatures further contributed to soil drying and intensified drought stress.

River levels in lowland Croatia declined further, and a statement on the continuation of hydrological drought was issued at the beginning of the month. [4] Record-low river levels posed a threat to the water supply system, while a warning of possible first-stage water-use restrictions was issued in Istria. [5]

Drought also had adverse effects on agricultural crops. A request to declare a natural disaster was made at the beginning of the month, and by the end of the month, a **natural disaster had been declared** in numerous municipalities and counties. [6, 7, 8, 9] Prolonged dry and very warm weather dried out the soil to such an extent that agricultural machinery was unable to operate in some arable fields. [10] At the same time, harvesting took place earlier than usual, with significantly lower yields recorded for some crops, including **maize, soybean and sugar beet**. [11] **Grape** harvesting, particularly in Istria, also began exceptionally early. [12] The President of the Croatian Chamber of Agriculture also drew attention to the increasing frequency of drought seasons and the need to adapt agricultural production conditions in an open letter addressed to farmers and the public. [13]

Dry vegetation contributed to an increased risk of **vegetation fires** and their spread. Throughout the month, the Croatian Firefighting Association regularly warned of adverse weather conditions and the need for increased caution. [14] Compared to the previous year, 2025, the number of vegetation fires increased across Croatia. [15] One of the most severe incidents was the fire near Lokva Rogoznica, which, in addition to causing extensive material damage, resulted in fatalities, while fires were also reported in several other parts of the country. [16, 17]

SERBIA

Agricultural production in Serbia recorded different results this year: while fruit and vegetable growers expected good yields, the lack of water left consequences on other agricultural crops. [1, 2] Extreme drought, accompanied by air temperatures exceeding critical limits for days, affected Vojvodina region in northern Serbia the most, which is the most important agricultural part of the country. **Corn** was the hardest hit, while there were problems also in the production of **soybeans, animal feed and turnip** as unfavourable weather conditions occurred during important stages of plant development, leading to premature ripening of plants. This would likely lead to a significant drop in yields of major agricultural crops. [3, 4, 5, 6, 7] Decrease in corn yields by about 30–40 % was expected, compared to the yield achieved under normal conditions. Per one hectare this can amount to a **decrease in income** of around 400 euros, while for soybeans it can be 500 to 600 euros per hectare. [8]

Corn silage started a month earlier, at the time when also Danube River water level was getting lower, thus **transportation problems** occurred as farmers had little options to sell grain to where barges would not sail. [9]

In the light of considerable impact of drought to the agriculture sector this year, the Committee of the Serbian Parliament for Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management issued **mitigation response** and recommended that the justification of basic incentives of 18,000 dinars per hectare be abolished due to the drought. [10, 11] In the view of critical situation regarding water resources and wildfire outbreaks, the Emergency Situations Headquarters meeting resulted in the decision that Serbijavode, the National Water Resource Management company, and other legal entities with appropriate resources make their human, material and technical **resources available to the emergency sector**, in accordance with available capacities. [12]

Drought and winds contributed greatly to the faster spread of the numerous **wildfires** that broke out across several parts of the country, including Mount Stolovi, central Serbia, Trnovačka Reka locality, southern Serbia, Deliblatska Pescara, northeastern Serbia. [13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18] Due to extensive area burnt by the wildfires,

states of emergency had been declared for various municipalities, including Kladovo and parts of Bela Crkva, all in eastern Serbia. [19, 20, 21, 22]

Drought and heat waves caused low navigation levels on the Danube, Sava and Tisa rivers near Titel, northern Serbia. On rivers Kolubara, Jadar, Toplica, Vlasina, tributaries of the Zapadna and Velika Morava, as well as on rivers Crni and Bela Timok, the amount of water in the rivers approached the minimum necessary levels for the survival of the **river ecosystem**, thus affecting **navigation, tourism**, and **water and electricity supplies** in the region. [23] In early August, Serbia was facing the lowest water level of the Danube River in the last 100 years, according to the Minister of Interior. [24] By mid-August, Gruzan Lake in central Serbia completely dried up and the water in some parts receded hundreds of meters from its usual shore. The lake is otherwise of vital importance for the water supply of Kragujevac and the surrounding areas. [25] Drought and falling water levels in rivers and lakes forced several municipalities to take drastic measures and introduce **bans on water use**, including Novi Pazar, southwestern Serbia and Arilje, western Serbia. [26, 27] **State of emergency due to limited drinking water resources** was declared in parts of Valjevo, western Serbia and for the municipality of Arilje, which introduced **partial suspension of water delivery** between 6 a.m. and 9 a.m. as well as between 8 p.m. and 10 p.m. [28, 29, 30] At the request of the local self-government authorities, Serbian Armed Forces were engaged in providing **assistance in water supply** to households in the territory of Bujanovac, Veliko Gradiste and Krusevac, primary for replenishing wells and water tanks used for households and for watering livestock. [31]

GREECE

The hot-dry-windy conditions that prevailed for several days in certain regions of Greece contributed to the outbreak of **wildfires**. At least 111,700 stremmata (*1 stremma equals 1,000 m^2*) were burnt by the megafire in Attica and Boeotia, central Greece. [1, 2] By 4 August 2026, more than 180,000 stremmata had been affected, including forested areas, farmland, olive groves, homes, infrastructure, and local businesses. Of particular concern were areas that have burned again in the last 20 years, as the ability of forest ecosystems to recover naturally was significantly reduced, increasing the **risk of permanent degradation** and desertification. [2] According to the European Copernicus satellite system data, the fire in Siviri, Kassandra, in Chalkidiki burned 2,480 stremmata [3, 4], while the fire on the island of Salamis, Attica in a mixed residential and forested area resulted in two deaths. [5, 6]

Methodology

DMCSEE Drought monitoring bulletin is prepared using 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. The remote-sensing product Fraction of vegetation cover (FCOVER) is based on the Copernicus Sentinel-2 data (https://custom-scripts.sentinel-hub.com/custom-scripts/sentinel-2/fcover/) and presented for the confirmed locations, using the available years from 2017 to the last full calendar year (currently up to and including 2025) as a reference period. Information on drought impacts is obtained by DMCSEE consortium institutions from freely available online reports and media newspapers.