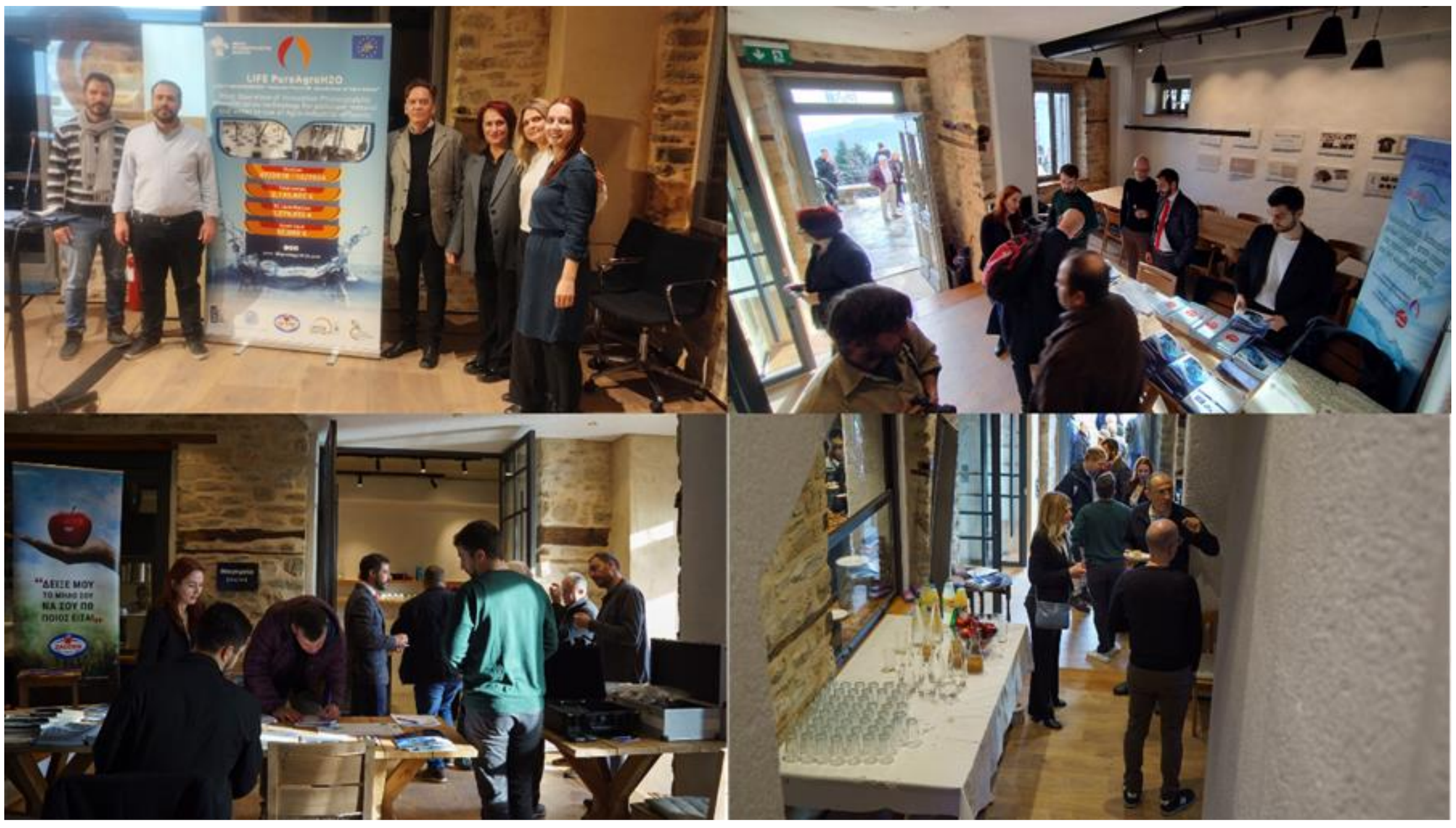
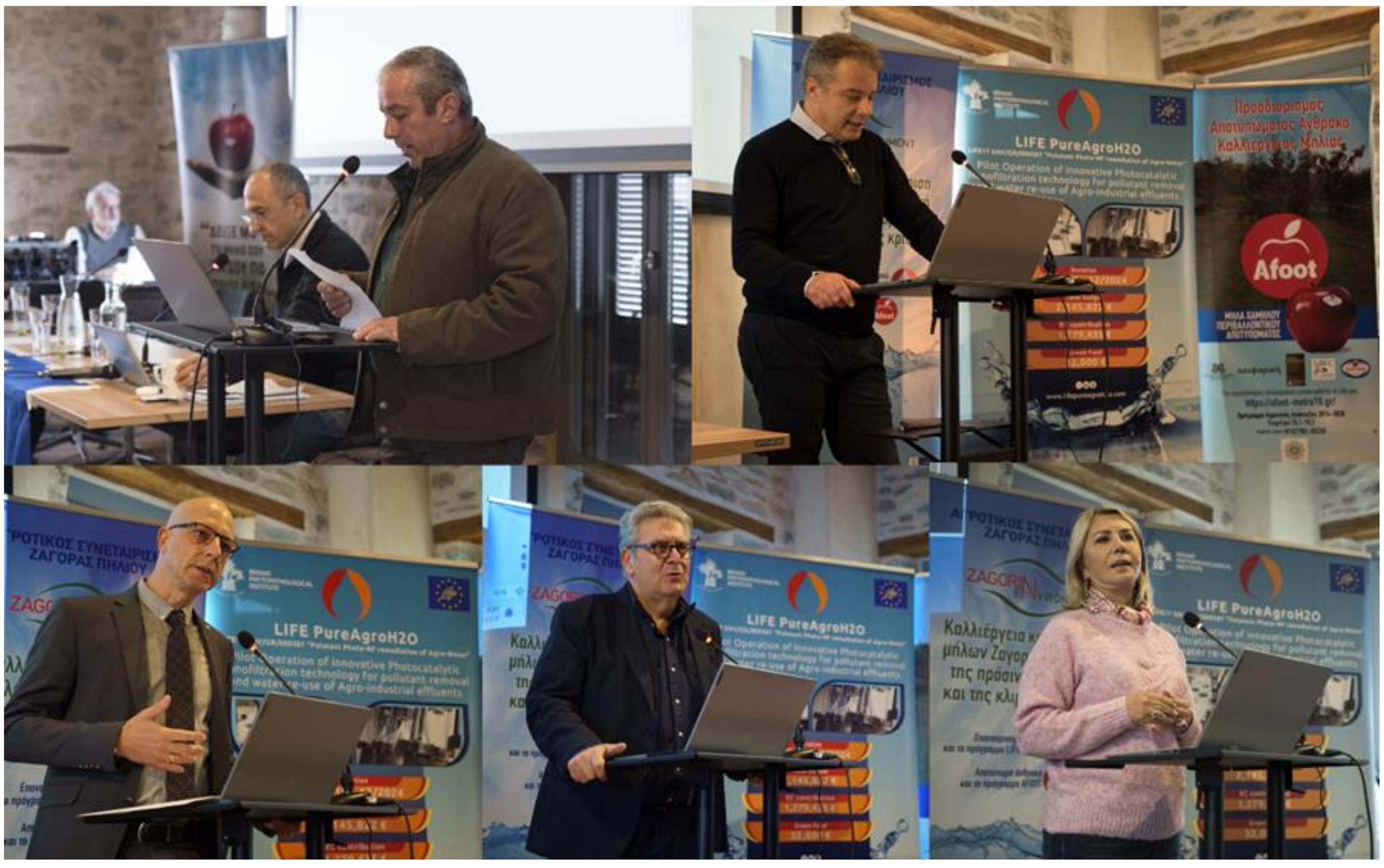
The 4th LIFE "PureAgroH2O" project conference took place in Zagora, Pelion

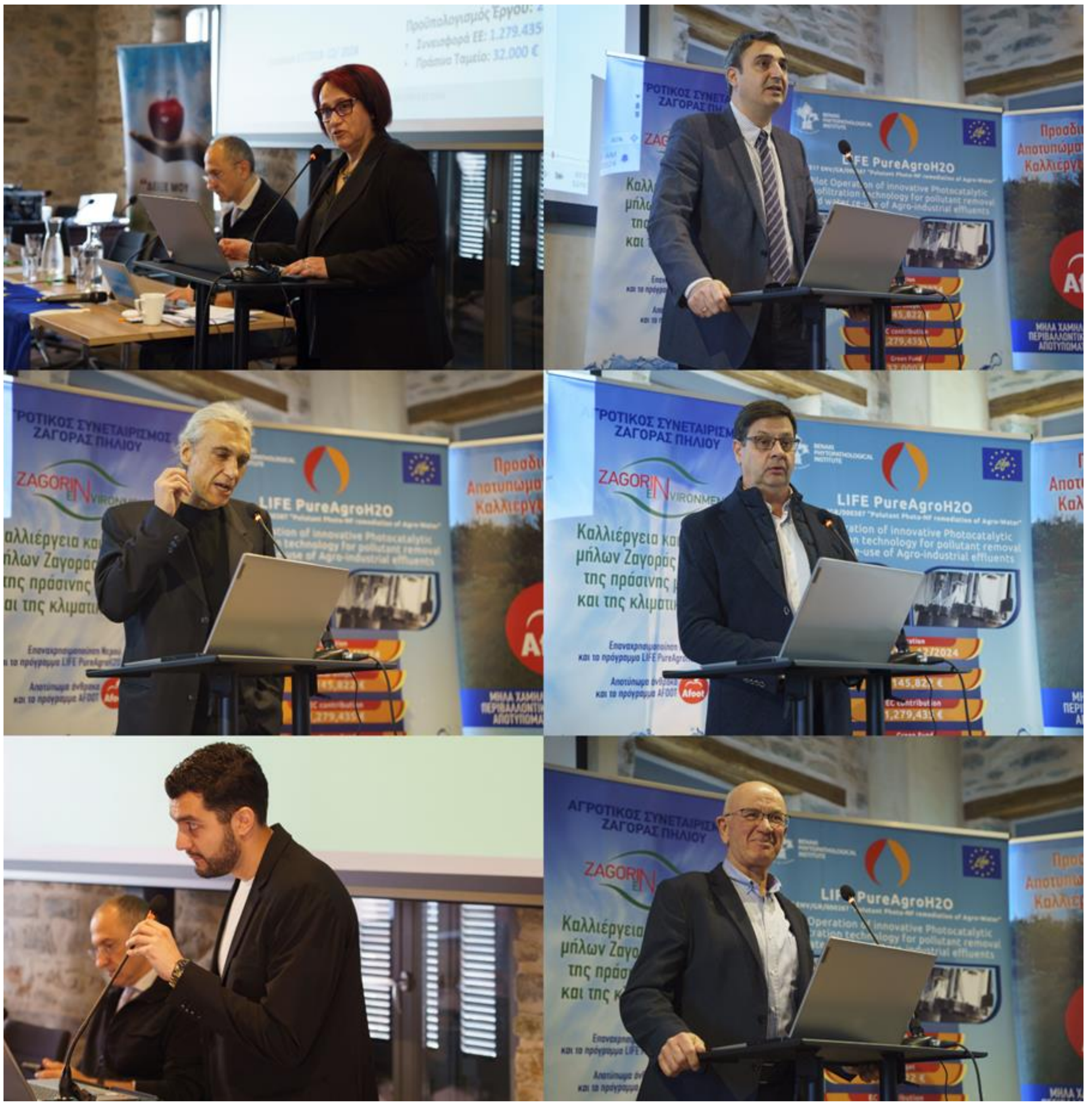
The 4th LIFE PureAgroH2O conference titled "**Cultivation and Management of Zagora Apples in the Era of Green Transition and Climate Crisis**" was held on Monday, 9 December 2024, in Zagora, Pelion. The conference was organized by the **Agricultural Cooperative of Zagora** in collaboration with the **AFOOT program**, aiming to highlight the importance of water reuse and environmental protection in the face of climate change. This aligns with the primary mission of one of the most dynamic cooperatives in the country, known for its long-standing history and tradition in apple production.



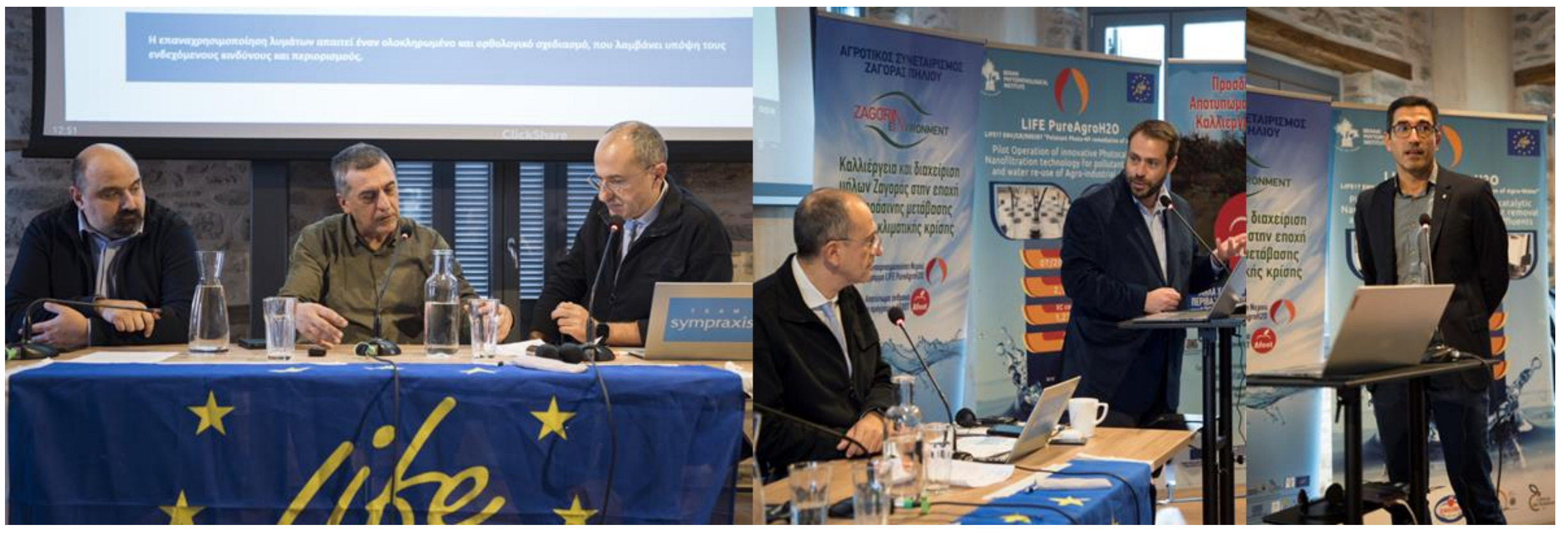
Mr. Ioannis Kravvaris, President of the Agricultural Cooperative of Zagora, delivered an opening speech to the attendees. The conference was welcomed by **Mr. Konstantinos Karageorgiou**, Mayor of Zagora-Mouresi; **Mr. Ioannis Anastasiou**, Deputy Regional Governor for Digital Governance & Citizen Services; **Mr. Vasilios Klitsogiannis,** General Director of the Association of Industries of Thessaly-Central Greece; and **Mrs. Zeta Makri**, Deputy Minister of Education.



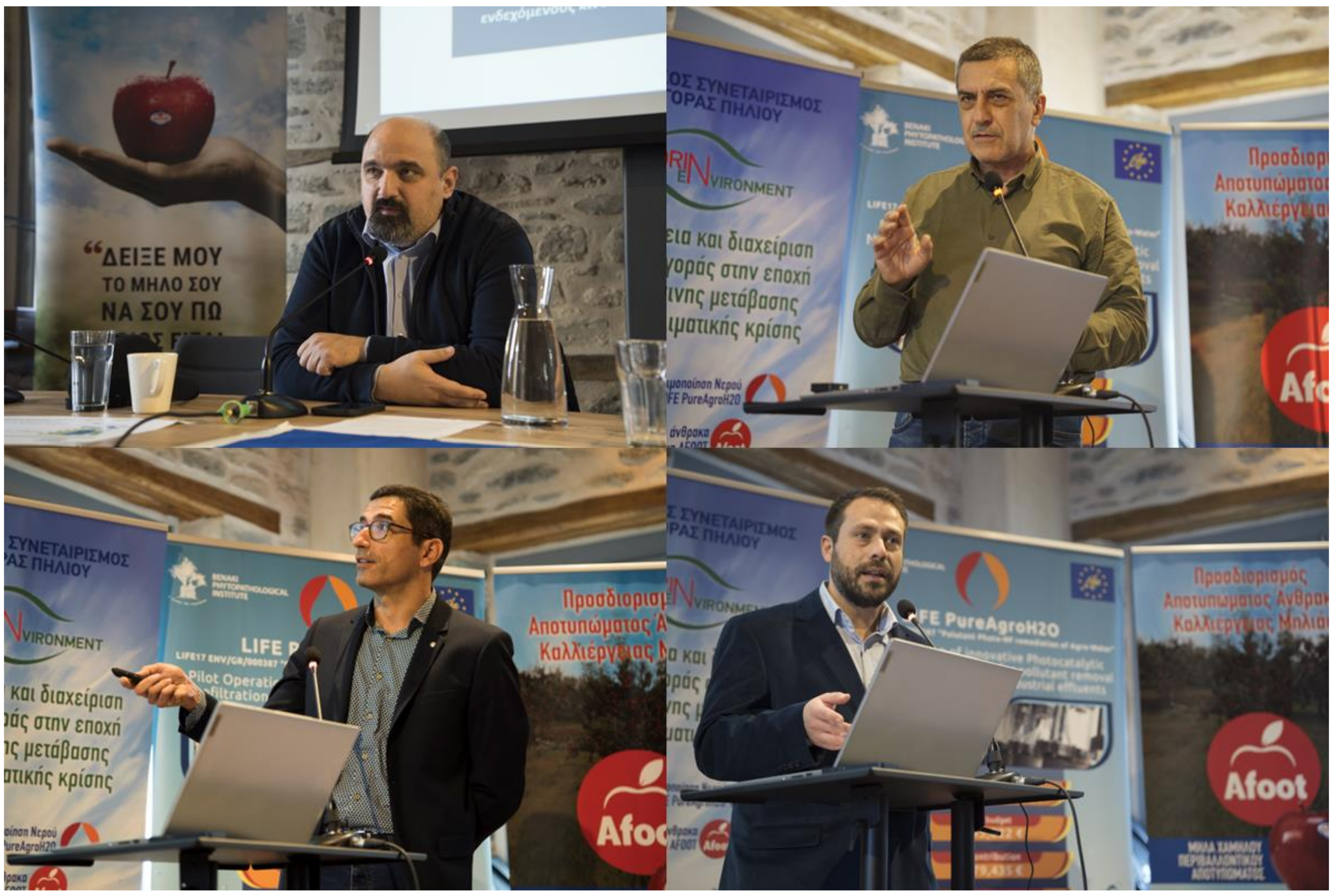
The Life PureAgroH2O project was introduced by the project Coordinator **Dr Emilia Markellou** (Benaki Phytopathological Institute), who presented the key aspects and achievements of the initiative. **Professor Ioannis Katsogiannis** (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki) emphasized the importance of water recycling as a strategy to face water shortage in the agro-industrial sector, particularly in water-scarce regions. In addition to sewage treatment, he highlighted the role of other technologies and approaches, such as desalination and nature-based technologies, rainwater collection, and water conservation. **Dr Georgios Romanos** (National Centre of Physical Sciences "Demokritos") presented the most innovative components of the photocatalytic nanofiltration reactor, a significant technological breakthrough in the wastewater treatment of the agro-industrial sector, and the results of its pilot-scale operation in the A.C. of Zagora. **Professor Jose Antonio Sanchez Perez** (Vice-rector for Scientific Policy, University of Almeria) introduced pilot and demonstration scale solar energy technologies for waste-water decontamination and regeneration. **Mr. Pavlos Politsakis** (Aeiforiki SA) discussed the role of Innovation Partnerships and Hubs in tackling climate change. Meanwhile, **Professor Georgios Nanos** (University of Thessaly) presented findings from the AFOOT project regarding the carbon footprint of apples produced by the Agricultural Cooperative of Zagora.



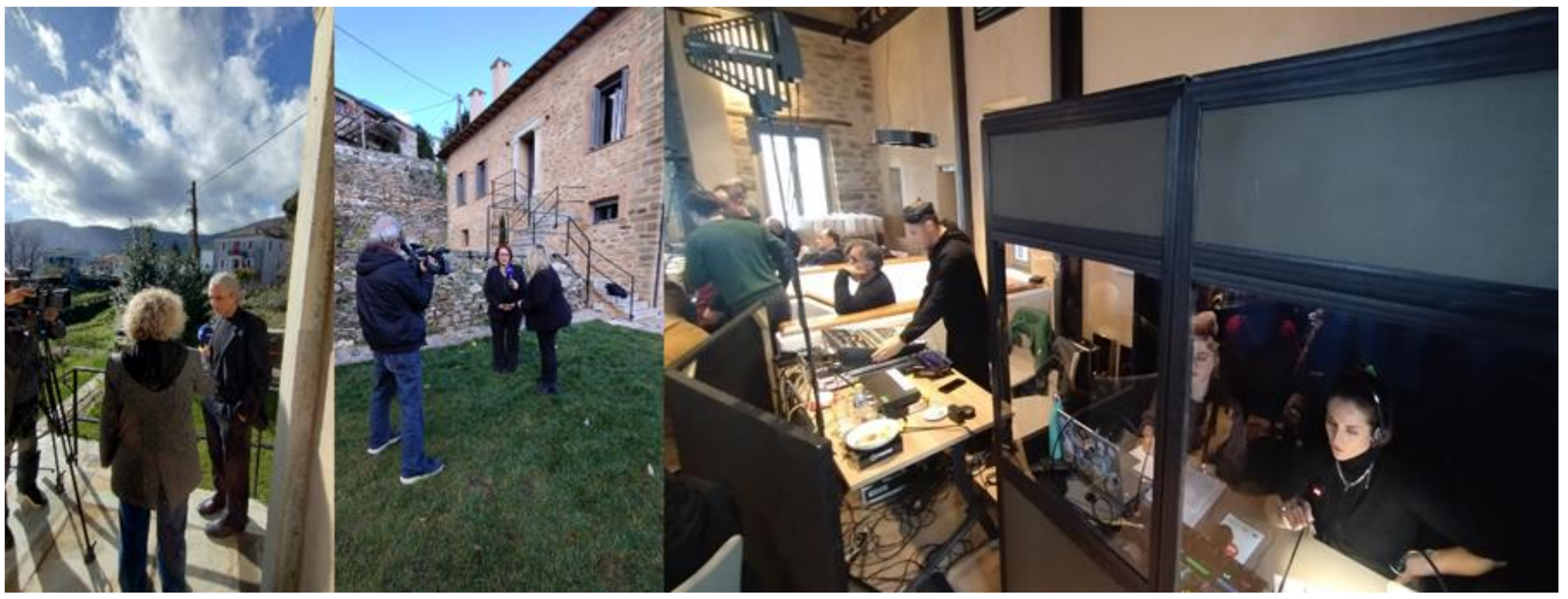
Water management issues were discussed in a **Round Table** in the presence of **Dr Christos Triantopoulos**, Deputy Minister of Climate Crisis and Civil Protection; **Dr Dimitrios Kouretas** Regional Governor of Thessaly; and **Professor Jose Luis Casa Lopez** (University of Almeria).



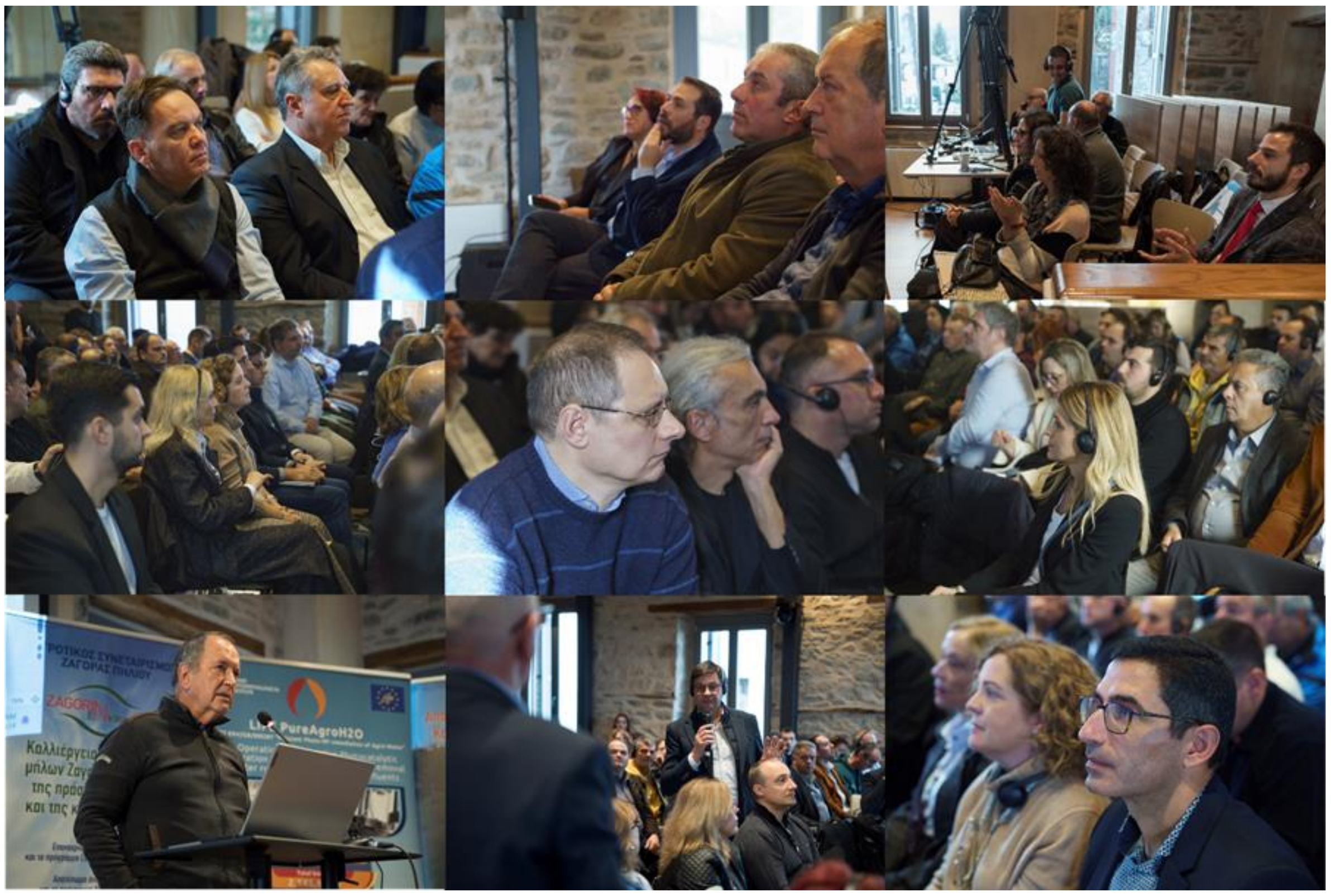
Dr Triantopoulos and **Dr Kouretas** were positioned for the criticality of water management in the production process, and analyzed the country's environmental policy, horizontal strategies, reforms, and action programs aimed at creating a framework for improving the adaptive capacity of the country's climate resistance and the gradual transition to climate neutrality by 2050. **Professor Jose Luis Casas Lopez** presented the Spanish regulation and the broader European legal framework on wastewater reuse and depicted that the new regulation implies that we need to be technologically prepared for the new limits in terms of disinfection and the elimination of pollutants of emerging concern. **Mr. Antonios Politis** presented the environmental policy of Zagorin, outlining both current and future initiatives aimed at protecting biodiversity and the cultural heritage of the region. He highlighted efforts to minimize chemical inputs in apple orchards, the implementation of Integrated Pest Management (IPM), and various technological advancements. Additionally, he emphasized the cooperative's achievements in reducing carbon footprints and protecting water resources, made possible through multiple projects and actions — with the LIFE PureAgroH2O project being the most significant.



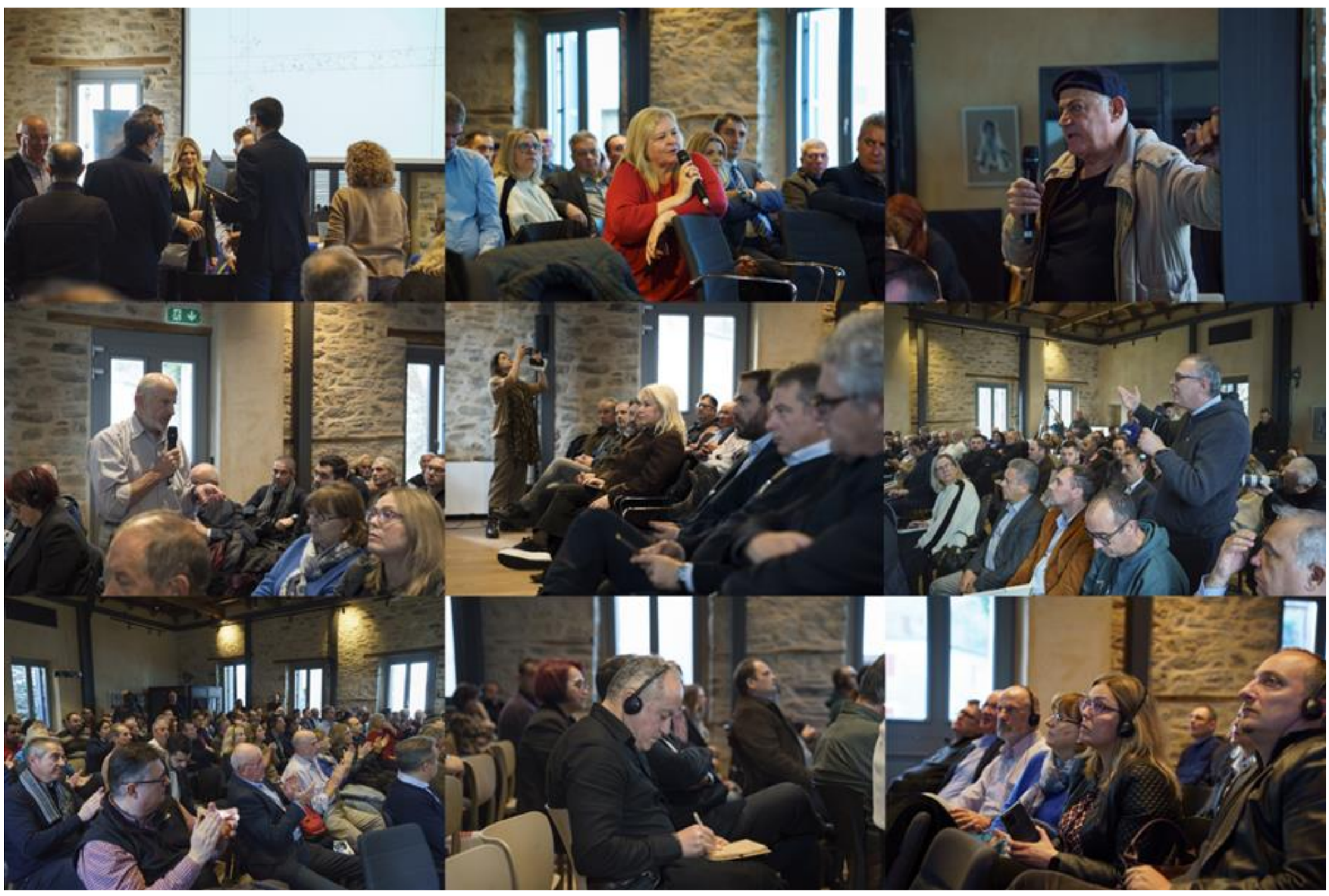
The event was covered fully by the **local and national press, and TV and radio broadcasting channels**. Several interviews of the LIFE PureAgroH2O partners' scientific and administrative personnel, and of Greek and Regional state delegates took place, and indicative **press releases and broadcasts** can be followed in the following web links: https://www.ertnews.gr/eidiseis/ellada/entheto-georgia-megales-oi-prooptikes-gia-to-marouli-tis-thalassas/ ; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKOQ0DKaQ2k and the project's webpage https://www.lifepureagroh2o.com/ .



The conference **was attended in person by 106 participants** including leading scientists from Greece and Spain, representatives of productive entities, producers of agricultural products, and representatives of local government and political leadership.

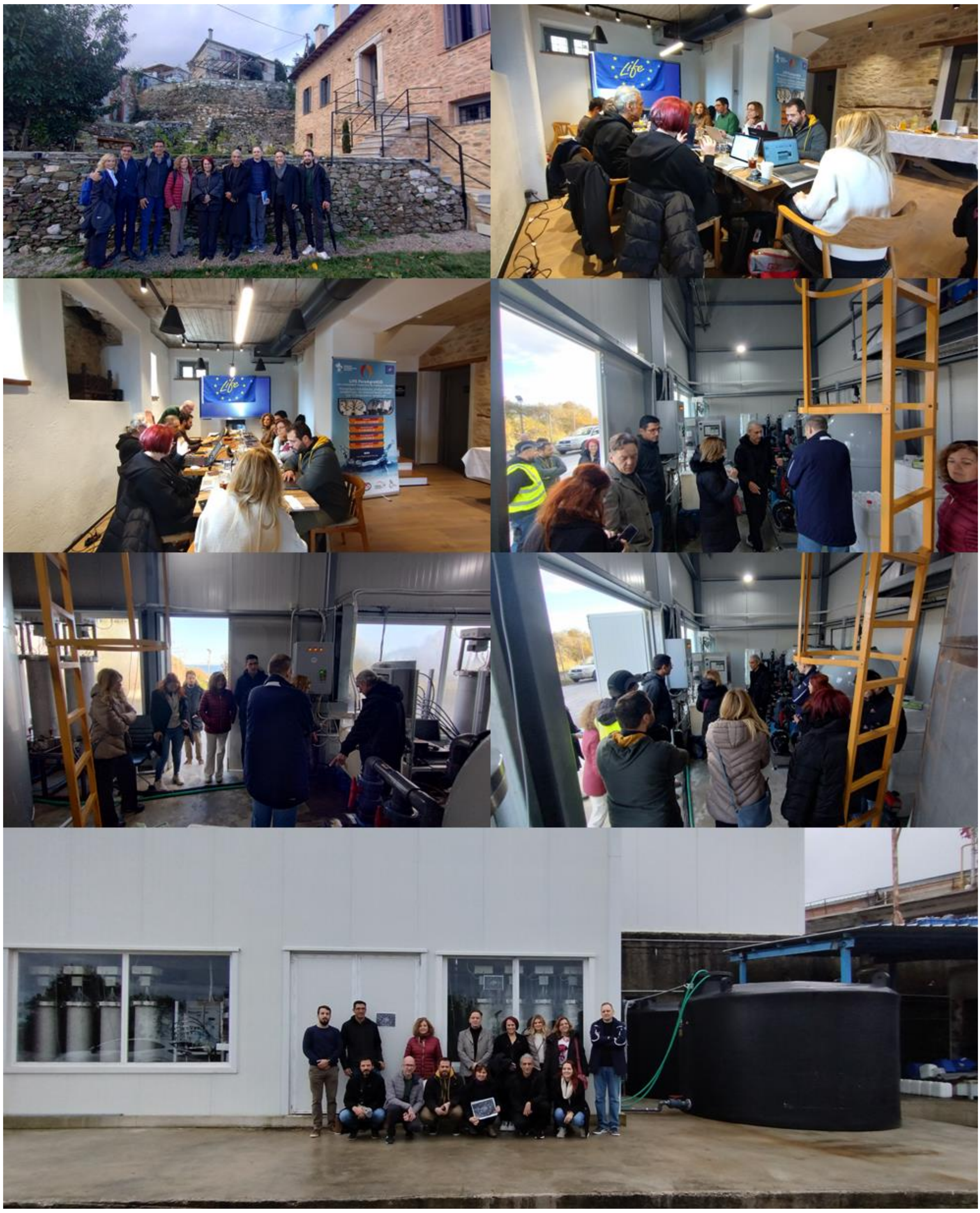


Mr. Athanasios Belalidis (Sympraxis Team) coordinated the conference which was **streamed live in real-time on YouTube** with live **Greek Spanish interpretation**. The event was **supported by** the **Association of Industries of Thessaly and Central Greece**. After the conference closure a guided tour to the PNFR installation at the premises of the A.C. of Zagora took place for the conference's attendees. For **more information** you can visit the program website https://www.lifepureagroh2o.com/ or watch the live streaming of the event at the link https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NqeV1YfVuGg .



Final Monitoring Visit by CINEA

On December 10, 2024, **Mrs. Sophia Papageorgiou**, a member of the LIFE Programme External Monitoring Team, conducted the final project visit at the premises of the A.C. Zagora. The LIFE PureAgroH2O team presented progress updates, project results, and challenges encountered during the implementation of the project. The visit included a guided tour of the operational PNFR demonstration unit and the A.C. Zagora industrial facilities.



BENAKI PHYTOPATHOLOGICAL INSTITUTE
DEMOKRITOS
ZAGORIN HELLAS
UNIVERSIDAD DE ALMERÍA
CIESOL Solar Energy Research Center Joint Center UAL • PSA CIEMAT
Cítricos del Andarax S.A.