



Launch of the EU Soil Observatory

Soil: the living heart of a sustainable and healthy Europe

Virtual meeting

4th December 2020

Healthy soils are at the heart of the Green Deal for Europe. Once lost, soils are non-renewable in terms of human lifetimes. In addition to providing us with food, fibres and fuel, soils play a key role in regulating the Earth's climate, providing us with clean water, protecting us from floods and preserves our cultural heritage. A unique habitat in its own right, life within soils underpin all terrestrial ecosystems while providing us with potential new medicines.

However, unsustainable land use together with growing population pressure, changes in consumption patterns and increasing extreme weather events are driving soil degradation. The recent proposal for a Soil Health and Food Mission 'Caring for soil is caring for life' has set the ambitious challenge to ensure that by 2030, 75% of the soils of the EU are healthy for food, people, nature and climate.

It is no surprise that soil is then the glue that brings together the different strategies of the Green Deal. Sustainable soil management and the restoration of degraded land is critical if biodiversity protection targets are to be achieved. Efficient nutrient management, including carbon sequestration to offset climate change, are key measures in the Common Agricultural Policy while reducing pesticide residue levels are aspirations under both the Farm2Fork Strategy and the Zero Pollution Action Plan. Finally, reduced soil sealing and organic waste cycles are both targets of the Circular Economy Action Plan.

It is in this context that the JRC is establishing the EU Soil Observatory, a dynamic and inclusive platform that aims to provide Commission Services, and the broader soil user community, with the diverse knowledge needs and data flows needed to safeguard soils. These include high-resolution, harmonized and quality assured soil information (showing status and trends) that is supported by the outcomes of targeted research. Reflecting the challenge of the Mission and goals of the Soil Thematic Strategy, the Observatory will also support greater citizen engagement and soil literacy to raise awareness of the societal value of soil.

This one-day launch event will introduce the new Soil Observatory and its role in addressing the challenges laid down for Europe by both the Green Deal and the Soil Health and Food Mission. The meeting will consist of a morning session with high level presentations and panel discussions followed by an open technical discussion in the afternoon with a view to support future orientations.





EU Soil Observatory Launch

Friday 4 December 2020

Virtual meeting via Webex

Public participation via Webstreaming and Slido

10:00 -11:50: Setting the scene: panel discussion on policy outlooks and needs on sustainable use of soil

09:45 – 10:00	Meeting open for connection	
10:00 – 10:10	Welcome and moderation	<i>Giovanni De Santi</i> EC Joint Research Centre Director: Sustainable Resources
10:10 – 10:20	The EU Soil Observatory	<i>Luca Montanarella</i> Joint Research Centre
10:20 – 10:35	Panel Discussion 1: Soils in the Green Deal	<i>Humberto Delgado Rosa</i> EC DG ENV Director: Natural Capital <i>Nathalie Sauze-Vandevyver</i> EC DG AGRI Director: Quality, Research & Innovation <i>Nathalie Chaze</i> EC DG SANTE Director: Food Sustainability, International Relations
10:35 – 10:50	Questions from participants	
10:50 – 11:10	Panel Discussion 2: R&I infrastructures for soil	<i>Peter Wehrheim</i> EC DG RTD Head of Unit: Bioeconomy & Food Systems <i>Catia Bastioli</i> Industrial Perspective / Mission Board CEO Novamont <i>Claire Chenu</i> National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment (INRAE) / EJP SOIL Coordinator <i>Bernhard Url</i> Perspective from EU Agencies European Food Safety Agency Executive Director
11:10 – 11:30	Questions from participants	
11:30 – 11:45	General discussion and questions from audience	
11:45 – 11:50	Conclusions	<i>Giovanni De Santi</i>
11:50 – 11:58	Break	

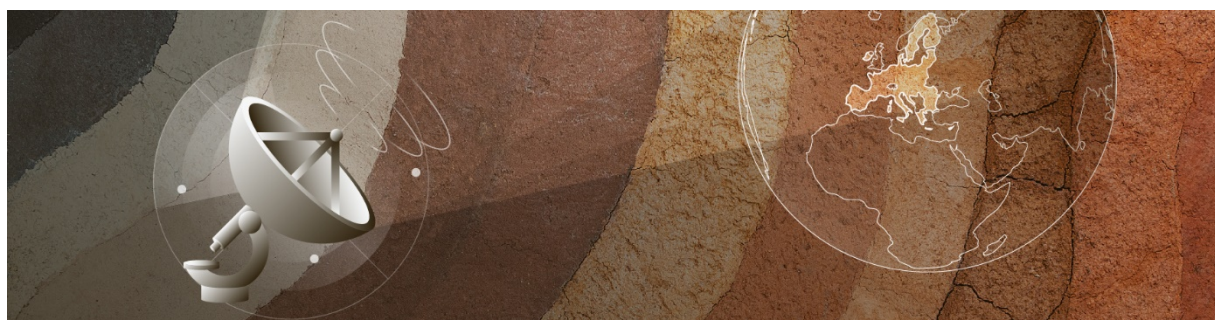


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12:00 -13:00: Formal launch of the EU Soil Observatory

12:00 – 12:05	Welcome and moderation	<i>Stephen Quest</i> EC Joint Research Centre Director General
12:05 – 12:20	The EU Soil Observatory	<i>Giovanni De Santi</i> EC Joint Research Centre Director: Sustainable Resources
12:20 -12:30	Statement from EU Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth	<i>Mariya Gabriel</i>
12:30 – 12:40	Statement from EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development	<i>Janusz Wojciechowski</i>
12:40 – 12:45	Statement on behalf of Commissioner Kyriakides	<i>Clare Bury</i> EC DG SANTE Deputy Director General
12:45 – 12:50	Statement from the Presidency of the Council of the European Union	<i>Andrea Noske</i> German Federal Ministry of Education Head of Division, Sustainable Economy; Bio-Economy
12:50 – 13:00	Caring for soil is caring for life: A Mission for Soil Health and Food	<i>Cees Veerman</i> Chair, Soil Health and Food Mission Board
13:00 – 13:05	Conclusions and end of 2 nd session	<i>Stephen Quest</i>
13:05 – 14:15	<i>Lunch break</i>	





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14:15 – 16:15 Technical implementation of Soil Observatory

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14:15 – 14:20	Welcome and Scope of meeting	<i>Constantin Ciupagea</i> EC JRC Head, Land Resources Unit
Session 1	The EU Soil Observatory	
14:20 – 14:30	Overview of key components	<i>Arwyn Jones</i> EC JRC
14:30 – 14:35	Why Citizen Engagement?	<i>Michael Berger</i> WWF
14:35 – 14:40	Support to research & innovation	<i>Katharina Helming</i> SMS H2020 / Leibniz Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research
14:40 – 14:45	Towards a soil indicator dashboard	<i>Rainer Baritz</i> European Environment Agency
14:45 – 15:10	Discussions and questions from audience	
Session 2:	Towards an integrated soil monitoring system for the EU	
15:10 – 15:15	Introduction	<i>Arwyn Jones</i> EC JRC
15:15 – 15:20	Monitoring in the Soil Thematic Strategy	<i>Mirco Barbero</i> EC DG Environment
15:20 – 15:25	Soil monitoring and LULUCF	<i>Simon Kay</i> EC DG Climate Action
15:25 – 15:30	Pesticides/Farm2Fork	<i>Christine Meisinger</i> EC DG Health and Food Safety
15:30 – 15:35	Soils and Agriculture	<i>Laura Aguglia</i> EC DG Agriculture and Rural Development
15:35 – 15:40	EJP Soil and LUCAS	<i>Antonio Bispo</i> INRAE
15:40 – 16:10	Open discussion on stakeholder needs and questions from the audience	
16:10 – 16:15	Wrap up, next steps and close of meeting	<i>Luca Montanarella</i> EC JRC