

# Soil Alliance News

**Newsletter** of the European Land  
and Soil Alliance (ELSA),

Soil and Land Alliance of European Cities, Districts and Municipalities



## EUROPEAN LAND & SOIL ALLIANCE

ELSA

## Issue 2/2024

Dear members and friends of the European Land and Soil Alliance,

In 2021, the European Commission presented the EU Soil Strategy for 2030. Its vision is that by 2050, all soil ecosystems in the EU will be in a healthy state and therefore more resilient.

According to estimates by the European Commission, 60 to 70 per cent of soils in Europe are not considered healthy. The aim is to make soil ecosystems in the EU healthy and resilient, to prevent soil contamination in the future and to remediate soils that are already polluted.

Healthy soils are an essential prerequisite for climate neutrality, a clean and circular economy and the containment of desertification and soil degradation. They thus contribute to the objectives of the European Green Deal.

The only harmonised legal framework for soil protection at EU level is still only the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the Member States. The draft Soil Monitoring Law presented by the EU Commission in 2023 provides neither quantitative targets nor concrete measures, but only the monitoring of the condition of our soils.

It is therefore all the more pleasing that the EU Council of Ministers adopted the Restoration Act, a core element of the Green Deal, on 17 June 2024. By 2030, at least 20 per cent of land and sea areas in the EU are to be restored and by 2050 all ecosystems in need of restoration - including our soils.

The Board

Soil Alliance News is published regularly. We welcome your suggestions and criticism. In addition, you have the opportunity to spread news, projects, events etc. here. Simply send us an [e-mail](#).

## Top-Topic: Soil protection in Europe

**EU member states pass renaturalisation law:** The environment ministers of the European Union have passed the renaturalisation law that has been under dispute for months. According to this law, more trees are to be planted in the European Union in future and moors and rivers are to be restored to their natural state. A sufficient majority of EU member states voted in favour of the plan.

[More information](#)

**Soil Monitoring Law - EU on the way to healthy soils by 2050:** With the general approach it adopted on 17 June 2024, the Council of the European Union wants to make soil health monitoring mandatory, set guidelines for sustainable soil management and address situations where soil contamination poses unacceptable risks to health and the environment.

[More information](#)

**EEB statement:** Based on the EU Council's decision to adopt the Soil Monitoring Law on 17 June 2024, the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) has published a statement and assessment. The EEB welcomes the achievement of a compromise, but regrets that Member States have failed to increase the much-needed ambition of the law.

[More information](#)

**European soil protection policy:** The EU Soil Strategy has outlined plans for a soil health law by 2030 to put soil on the same legal footing as air and water.

[More information](#)

**„Mission Soil – Living Labs“:** Among other things, the EU mission "A Soil Deal for Europe" aims to set up 100 living laboratories and lighthouses in urban and rural regions to jointly generate knowledge, test solutions and demonstrate their benefits under real conditions in order to support the goal of "Healthy Soils by 2023".

[More information](#)

**EU Parliament - Position on Soil Monitoring Law:** The EU Parliament has defined its position on the new Soil Monitoring Law. MEPs are proposing a five-level classification system to assess the condition of soils. They call for concrete targets to improve the ecological status of soils in the EU in order to bring all soils into a healthy state by 2050.

[More information](#)

**EEB's European Pact for the Future:** At the EEB Annual Conference and Annual General Meeting, the European Pact for the Future was adopted: a green and social agreement for a one-planet economy. Please join us in signing!

[More information](#)

**EU Academy for prospective soil consultants:** The NBSOIL Academy is a blended training programme aimed at both existing and aspiring soil advisors. Participants will work with experts in soil health and nature-based solutions, demonstration sites, extension services and other soil mission projects in the EU and associated countries to strengthen the knowledge and skills base for nature-based soil advice across all land use sectors. The Academy will open on 5 June 2024.

[More information](#)

## More messages

**Online participation in the further development of the German Sustainable Development Strategy:** The Federal Government has published the dialogue version of the German Sustainable Development Strategy (DNS). Interested parties can comment on the dialogue version and contribute their ideas for a sustainable, future-proof Germany. Participation is possible until 26 July 2024.

[More information](#)

**ECHO Soil Health Awareness Project:** ECHO is a research and innovation project funded by the European Union under the Horizon Europe programme. The project will run for 4 years - from June 2023 to May 2027 - and aims to engage citizens in the protection and restoration of Europe's soils by developing their skills and increasing their knowledge. ECHO ambassadors are currently being sought to take on various tasks from April 2024 to January 2025 to support the project.

[More information](#)

**Soil description and soil classification according to the 4th edition of the WRB 2022:** On their YouTube channel, the Chair of Soil Science at the Technical University of Munich shows how to address a soil profile based on the 4th edition of the World Reference Base for Soil Resources (WRB) field book.

[More information](#)

**Soil focus at the Week of the Environment 2024:** Once again, the Week of the Environment hosted by the Federal President and the DBU on 4 and 5 June featured expert forums on soil, including the topic "Soil health - soil functions - climate change: what should/should we protect?" The interactive panel discussion was organised by the German Soil Science Society (DBG) and the German Soil Association (BVB).

[More information](#)

**The thin skin of the earth - our soils:** The travelling exhibition of the SENCKENBERG Museum of Natural History Görlitz can be seen in Vienna until 3 March 2025. Part of the exhibition is a series of lectures by experts who present exciting facts about soil.

[More information](#)

**Looking for unsealing projects in the Alpine region:** In June 2024, CIPRA International is launching an Alpine-wide competition for municipalities, civil society initiatives, researchers and companies. The aim of the competition is to collect good examples of unsealing and soil improvement.

[More information](#)

**Planet Soil – The Power of the Underground:** A new documentary that puts the spotlight on the hidden world beneath our feet with all its potential and organisms. The film is intended to encourage viewers to treat our soils more carefully and sustainably.

[More information](#)

**100th Land & Soil Alliance municipality in Upper Austria:** The market town of Raab is the 100th municipality in Upper Austria to join the Land & Soil Alliance. This means that every second Upper Austrian now lives in a Land & Soil Alliance municipality. A warm welcome!

[More information](#)

## Publications

**Soils of Germany, Austria and Switzerland:** A special pictorial atlas that comprehensively illustrates the soils of Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

[More information](#)

**International Yearbook of Soil Law and Policy 2022:** The yearbook presents a series of legal assessments of climate protection, adaptation and sustainable soil management.

[More information](#)

**Overview of indicators in soil-related reporting in Germany and the EU:** The health of our soils is an important political goal that is highly relevant to many policy areas. This report provides an overview of the indicators that are currently used to report on the state of soil and its changes throughout Germany, in the individual federal states and internationally, and documents indicators and indicator ideas that are currently being developed.

[More information](#)

**Federal/state dialogue on land use - an interim summary:** The report documents the interim status of a dialogue process on the topic of land use that was conducted between 2020 and 2022 with stakeholders from the federal government, the states and municipalities as well as associations and scientific institutions.

[More information](#)

**Six Inches Of Soil – The Book:** Based on the film "Six Inches Of Soil", which tells the story of young British farmers who are rebelling against the industrial food system and want to heal the soil and our health with the production of their food, a book has now been published.

[More information](#)

**Soil biodiversity is indispensable for climate protection and the provision of natural resources:** Recommendations of the Soil Protection Commission at the UBA (KBU) for nationwide soil biological monitoring. The position paper focuses on two questions: 1) What needs to be done specifically? and 2) Why do we need to take action now? It addresses the most important tasks for the coming years in order to characterise soil biodiversity in Germany and define good ecological status.

[More information](#)

## The Soil Idea

**Soil Saviour Initiative:** The company "followfood" has launched an initiative to support the transition to organic farming with healthy soils. Farmers who think and work in a regenerative way beyond organic are supported financially by the company through products sold or through a soil saviour fund.

[More information](#)

## News from the Climate Alliance

**CAIC24 | Climate Alliance Annual International Conference:** The Climate Alliance's Annual International Conference from 9 to 11 October 2024 will focus on what regions, cities and municipalities can do to strengthen resilience at the local level. The focus will be on the use of nature-based solutions, combating energy poverty, using data for sustainable municipal planning and much more. Participants can immerse themselves in interactive workshops, present their own experiences and success stories and exchange ideas with colleagues and other actors from the municipal climate protection sector.

[More information](#)

## Soil Alliance internal

**New members:** Kompetenzzentrum Natürlicher Klimaschutz (KNK) (GER) and Marktgemeinde Raab (AT). A warm welcome!

## Event information

**EUROSOIL 2025:** Congress of the European Confederation of Soil Science Societies (ECSSS), 08 to 12 September 2024, Seville (ES)

[More information](#)

**Soil Systems Ecology – Organic Matter, Energetics & Turnover,** Internationale Konferenz, 09. bis 11. September 2024, Humboldt Universität, Berlin (DE)

[More information](#)

**Soil is valuable - conserving resources, making good use of it,** 15th BVB Annual Conference, Conference of the German Soil Association (BVB), 18-20 September 2024, Karlsruhe (GER)

[More information](#)

**Soil - Tree - Climate in City and Country,** Annual Conference of the European Land and Soil Alliance (ELSA), 26/27 September 2024, Tulln (AT)

[More information](#)

**EUROPE - NATURAL - CONNECTED,** 37th German Nature Conservation Day, 24 to 28 September 2024, Saarbrücken (GER)

[More information](#)

**Evaluation of soils of post-mining landscapes,** conference of the Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus-Senftenberg (BTU), the Technical Tax Office Cottbus (TFA) responsible for soil estimation, the Research Institute for Post-Mining Landscapes Finsterwalde (FIB), the State Office for Mining, Geology and Raw Materials (LBGR) and Lausitzer Energie AG (LEAG), 30 September to 2 October 2024, Cottbus (GER)

[More information](#)

**Promoting resilience in our regions, cities & communities,** International Annual Conference of the Climate Alliance, 09 to 11 October 2024, Cascais (PT)

[More information](#)

**Soils and climate in transition,** Marktredwitz Soil Protection Days, 16 to 18 October 2024, Marktredwitz (GER)

[More information](#)

**Heavy rainfall events in a changing climate - challenges for soil, water and settlement protection,** Soil-Water-Site Protection Forum, 18 October 2024, Osnabrück (GER)

[More information](#)

## Impressum

European Land and Soil Alliance (ELSA) e.V.

Klaus-Strick-Weg 10, D - 49082 Osnabrück

Phone: +49 (0) 541 323 7035 | Fax: +49 (0) 541 323 15 7035

E-Mail: [mail@soil-alliance.org](mailto:mail@soil-alliance.org)

Web: [www.soil-alliance.org](http://www.soil-alliance.org)

Osnabrück, Osnabrück Local Court, registration number: VR 3124

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