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[Event](#) | 18.11.2015

## Why Soil matters?

### A European perspective

#### CONFERENCE REPORT, PRESENTATIONS AND SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

- [Conference report \(e-book\)](#)
- [Speaker biographies](#)
- [Christine Watson, Scotland's Rural College \(SRUC\)](#)
- [Valo Dantinne, Agroecological Gardener and Trainer, Terre et Humanisme](#)
- [Video - Earth and Humanism - Soil Analysis](#)
- [Andrea Vettori, Acting Head of Unit Agriculture, Forests and Soil in the Directorate-General for the Environment of the European Commission](#)
- [Video - Soil Culture at Create](#)
- [Hans-Joachim Mautschke from Gut Krauscha, Germany, Farmer from SOLMACC project 'Organic Farmers countering Climate Change'](#)
- [Moujahed Achouri, Director Land & Water Division, FAO](#)
- [VIDEO REPLAY](#)

*English and French subtitles available - click on the 'Settings' button in the video window and select language*

#### Animation - Why soil matters?

**PROGRAMME** *Soil is a living ecosystem, which is essential for human and environmental health. A healthy living soil sustains biodiversity, protects and nourishes crops and contributes to climate change mitigation and adaptation. But soil is under threat today. We lose an estimated 24 billion tons of fertile soil each year due to erosion, while many of the soil functions that are delivered for free to provide productive, fertile and nutritious food systems are destroyed because we systematically sterilise our soils with agro-chemicals, and then farmers pay again to replace those lost functions. Without protecting the soil, bringing it back to life and building topsoil, it will be impossible to feed people, keep global warming below 2°C, transition to a toxic-free future, halt the loss of biodiversity and adapt to the challenges of climate change and extreme weather events. 2015 is the UN Year of soil. This year has been the occasion to put the issue of soil back on the political agenda. Many events worldwide have raised concerns about the importance of soil.*

*Now is time to bring the issue back on the European political agenda: Why Soils matter? What can we do at EU level to assure a healthy living soil, basis of our food systems and essential to prevent climate change? This session will discuss the links between soils, food security and climate, and how this interconnectivity is dealt with at a European level. It will involve high level speakers from the academic world and share practical approaches from field actors, working on the ground to preserve healthy living soils. The event will bring a European perspective to major ongoing global debates, such as the discussion around sustainable food policies and agroecology and the upcoming Climate Summit (COP21).*

9.30-10.00

## **Introduction**

Welcome words and moderator by **Michael Hamell**, Adjunct Professor of Agriculture at University College Dublin **Introduction** by MEP **Maria Heubuch** - followed by short movie screening **Keynote speaker, Dr. Vandana Shiva**, Alternative Nobel Prize winner, Author of 'Soil not Oil' and 'The living Soil' 10.00-11.10

## **PANEL 1: HEALTHY LIVING SOIL: THE BASIS FOR SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS**

Introduction by **MEP Martin Häusling** **Academics and field actors' view:**

- **Professor Christine Watson**, Scotland's Rural College (SRUC)
- **Valo Dantine**, Agroecological Gardener and Trainer, Terre et Humanisme

**Response from the European Commission:**

- **Andrea Vettori**, Acting Head of Unit Agriculture, Forests and Soil in the Directorate-General for the Environment of the European Commission

**Debate with the audience** 11.10-11.40

**Awareness rising opportunity**

**Introduction** by MEP **Molly Scott Cato** Story telling by **Barbara Geiger alias Fräulein Brehm** Shared Presentation of the projects 'Soil Culture at Create - a Recipe for Soil Guardianship' and 'People4Soil' 11.40- 12.50

## **SECOND PANEL: HEALTHY SOILS, CLIMATE-FRIENDLY FOOD: RAISING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE COP21**

**Introduction** by MEP **Bart Staes**

- **Teresa Anderson**, Action aid: Clever name, losing game - How climate-smart agriculture is sowing confusion in the food movement
- **Hans-Joachim Mautschke** from Gut Krauscha, Germany, Farmer from SOLMACC project 'Organic Farmers countering Climate Change'

**Response from the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**

- **Moujahed Achouri**, Director Land & Water Division, FAO
- **Jenny Wong** - UNFCCC

**Debate with the audience** 12.50-13.00

## Conclusions

**Joszi Smeets**, Director Youth Food Movement: Give youth a say on soil Concluding statements and next steps: **Michael Hamell** The event will be followed by a buffet lunch open to all participants 18.30

## Movie screening and debate on landgrabbing

Contributions from **MEPs Martin Häusling** (AGRI & ENVI Committee of the EP), **Barbara Lochbihler** (DROI & AFET Committee of the EP) and **Kurt Langbein** (Director of the movie).  
Moderation: **Stephan Backes** (European advocacy officer at FIAN International)

*The movie will have English subtitles  
and there will be English-German interpretation for the panel debate.  
Sandwiches will be provided in the room*

## important

**Registration is required** for all participants from outside the European Parliament. If you want to join the event, send an email to [barbara.lochbihler@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:barbara.lochbihler@europarl.europa.eu) **by November 10 the very latest**, stating your last name(s); first name(s); date of birth; nationality; type and number of official identification document.

## Watch the trailer

- [Screening programme](#)
- [Programme de la soirée](#)
- [Filmvorführung](#)
  
- [Related PAN Europe event - Symposium "Feeding Europe while reducing pesticide dependency"](#)

## Recommended

Press release

Hopfphotography



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17.06.2026

Press release

EasyBuy4u



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lebenslotse from pixabay



## [Fertiliser crisis: Commission fails to break fossil de...](#)

19.05.2026

Press release

Melissa Walker Horn



[CMO/Veggie burger: Quote from MEP Anna Strolenberg](#)

05.03.2026

**Responsible MEPs**



Maria Heubuch

Member

**Contact person**



Nelly Baltide

Advisor on Development

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