

Brussels, 13 March 2023

Joint open letter to the European Commission on the urgent need for an ambitious and progressive EU Soil Health Law

Dear Executive Vice-President and Commissioner for Climate Action Timmermans,

Dear Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries Sinkevičius,

Dear Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Kyriakides,

Dear Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth Gabriel,

Dear Commissioner for Agriculture Wojciechowski,

We, the Soil Health Law Coalition and signatories, are writing to you to express our support for an ambitious and progressive legislative proposal for an EU Soil Health Law.

The Soil Health Law Coalition and the signatories of this letter represent actors from the entire European agri-food system and other organizations, all of whom have a genuine interest in protecting and restoring the health of European soils. This includes farmers, scientists, impact startups, the finance and consulting industry, civil society organizations, soil, health and water associations, the food and retail industry, the circular bioeconomy sector, as well as citizens.

We strongly welcome the European Commission's initiative for a Soil Health Law and offer our support to the Directorate-General for Environment in realizing the comprehensive potential of soil legislation for society, planet and climate.

With the health of European soils rapidly degrading, an ambitious Soil Health Law is urgently needed. A legislative framework for soil has the potential to deliver much-needed policy integration and coherence, catalyzing the positive socio-ecological and -economic impact of EU policy. Healthy soils are fundamental to achieve the climate, biodiversity, water and zero pollution targets of the European Green Deal, and to support the EU's Farm to Fork objectives and transition to a sustainable food system.

It is fundamental to understand the cost-benefit structure of soil health monitoring and action: while the costs of soil health degradation to society, businesses and biodiversity are exponentially rising, the costs of soil health monitoring and soil health regeneration are rapidly decreasing.

An EU Soil Health Law must include:

- An unambiguous definition of soil health with indicators based on the newest soil science;
- Ambitious and binding targets on achieving soil health;
- Robust requirements on the sustainable use of soil;
- A binding “zero net land take” target;
- A comprehensive, harmonized and legally anchored soil health monitoring and reporting system;
- A strong governance framework for the Law's implementation and enforcement.

To support this, the Soil Health Law Coalition offers to share its expertise and provide more detailed political, economic, technological and legal analyses as needed.

We thank the European Commission and the Directorate-General for Environment for taking up this crucial task of improving soil health across Europe. Please be assured of our strong support for an ambitious and progressive Soil Health Law.

Sincerely,

The Soil Health Law Coalition and signatories

Coordinators: Simon Kraemer (simon.kraemer@nabu.de), Caroline Heinzl (caroline.heinzl@eeb.org), Max Meister (maximilian.meister@nabu.de) & Natascha Schwarzkopf (nschwarzkopf@projecttogether.org)

Signatories:

Farmers & Farmer and Producer/Consumer Associations

ECAF (European Conservation Agriculture Federation) (BE)

IFOAM Organics Europe (BE)

Clara Behr, Biodynamic Federation Demeter International e.V. (BE)

IFOAM AgriBioMediterraneo (Organics Mediterranean) (EL)

Ecoland e.V. - Verband für ökologische Land- und Ernährungswirtschaft (DE)

Demeter e.V. Germany (DE)

Bündnis für eine enkeltaugliche Landwirtschaft e.V. (DE)

Bund ökologische Lebensmittelwirtschaft e.V. (BÖLW) (DE)

Stiftung Haus der Bauern - Akademie Schloss Kirchberg (Akademie für ökologische Land - und Ernährungswirtschaft) (DE)

Urgenci International Community Supported Agriculture Network

True Price Foundation (NL)

Matthias Beuger, Assoziation ökologischer Lebensmittelhersteller e.V. (AöL) (DE)

nRhythm, Regenerative Organization Design (USA, UK, South Africa)
Sebastian Mittermeier, Naturland e.V. (DE)
Martin R. Stuchtey, Kollreider Hof, Kollreid 1, 9912 Anras (AT)
Torbjörn Reidarsson, Viby Postgård 4, Mantorp (SE)
Christine Bajohr, KugelSüdhangHof, Allgäu (DE)
Alexander Klümper, notill farmer (DE)
Lien Vrijders, Grassroots, Du Montstraat 53, 2100 Deurne (BE)
Justus Harm, SEKEM Development Foundation (Egypt)
Clare Hill, Planton Farm (UK)
Beate Caldewey-Samaras, Pangaio Manufaktur, 64008 Podochorin (EL)
Mark Drewell, Co-CEO, New Foundation Farms (UK)
Anne van Leeuwen, Bodemzicht farm, Sint Jacobsweg 13A, Malden (NL)
Helen Weeres, Regenerative Transitionworker at Bodemzicht Foundation (NL)
Prof. dr. Erik A. de Jong, chairman Bodemzicht Foundation, % Sint Jacobsweg 13A, Malden (NL)
Bart van Beuzekom, Scave.World B.V., Zandweg 26 Utrecht (NL)
Yanniek Schoonhoven, Regeneration Academy and La Junquera farm (ES)
Boris Spassky and Martin d'Archimbaud, La Granja farm Labastidette, Largest Label Bas Carbone orchard in France, Occitanie (FR)
Frank van der Vorm, carbon farmer Arvorest Lda (NL)
Rick van der Haar, Yugen Forest, Vossemeerdijk 6, Dronten (NL)
Innovative Landwirtschaft Reber, Michael Reber (DE)
Simon Dierickx, Greenotec's Coordinator, Wallonia (BE)
Sahar Shimon, The Association for Regenerative Agriculture and Agroforestry (Israel)
Mario Framis Pujol, Horta la Sinia (ES)
Benthe van Wallenburg, Stichting In Goede Aarde, Moersbergselaan 15 3941BW Doorn (NL)
Kylie Magner, Magners Farm, Ballynonty Co. Tipperary (IE)
Rudolf Bühler, Bäuerliche Erzeugergemeinschaft Schwäbisch Hall w.V. (DE)
Ted van Hees, Land van Ons Nijmegen/ coördinator volunteers Burgerboerderij De Biesterhof (NL)
Federico San Bonifacio, Agroforestry, Azienda Agricola San Bonifacio (IT)
Stefanie Pöpken, Animal Welfare Consultant (DE)
Luis Leblanc, ALVELAL FOODS S.C.A. (ES)
Bio-Modell-Landwirtschaft Hengstbacherhof (DE)
André Miguel, Cascais Ambiente (PT)
Giulia Bondesan, Permaculture Designer, Contrada Lepre (IT)

Ricardo Leonardo, livestock manager (DE/PT)
Aufbauende Landwirtschaft e.V. (DE)
António Coelho, farmer (PT)
Willemine de Jongh, farmer (PT)
Olesya Luckmann, GeoPard Agriculture (DE)
Sonja Retzlaff, Crowd & Rüben (DE)
Arnaud Daguin, Pour une agriculture du Vivant (FR)
Hof Lebensberg GmbH (DE)
ackerbaum GmbH & Co. KG (DE)
Forest Farmers GmbH & Co. KG (DE)
Joao Rodrigues, Herdade no Tempo (PT)
LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) (UK)
Jehane Akiki, Farms Not Arms (USA/Lebanon)
Ivan Lauc, CEO at Plodovi, SFSC (Short Food Supply chain) (HR)

Academia

(Professor) Pasquale Borrelli, UniRoma3 (University of Roma Tre) (IT)
(Dr.) Giovanni Pecchioni, SSSA (Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna, Pisa), ORDAF Liguria (Ordine Regionale dei Dottori Agronomi e Forestali, Liguria region) (IT)
Dr. Theodor Friedrich, retired senior agronomist of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Helmy Abouleish, Heliopolis University for Sustainable Development (Egypt)
Lukas Huhn, Technische Universität Hamburg (TUHH), Institut für Abwasserwirtschaft und Gewässerschutz (AWW) (DE)
Claas Menke, Technische Universität Hamburg (TUHH), Institut für Abwasserwirtschaft und Gewässerschutz (AWW) (DE)
Stefano Balbi, Basque Centre for Climate Change (BC3) (ES)
Javier Montellano, Project Manager at NBSOIL (Nature Based Solutions for Soil Management) (PL)
Igor Bogunović, University of Zagreb Faculty of Agriculture (HR)
Professor Thanasis Kizos, University of the Aegean, Department of Geography, Mytilini (EL)
PhDc Sentas Efstratios, University of the Aegean, Department of Geography, Mytilini (EL)
Prof. Dr. Maria R. Finckh, University of Kassel, Faculty of Organic Agricultural Sciences, Department of Ecological plant protection, Witzenhausen (DE)
Dr. Evelin Pihlap, The Centre of Estonian Rural Research and Knowledge (METK) (EE)
Anja Wagner, Master of Toxicology, Free Consultant

Dr. Joris de Vente, CSIC (Spanish Research Council) (ES)

Dr. Andrea Beste, Institute for Soil Conservation & Sustainable Agriculture, gesunde-erde.net (DE)

Dr. med. vet. Anita Idel, mediation and project management agrobiodiversity and animal health

Dr ir. Loekie Schreefel, Wageningen University and Research (NL)

Felipe Cozim Melges, PhD Candidate, Wageningen University and Research (NL)

Prof. Dr. Heribert Insam, Department of Microbiology, University of Innsbruck (AT)

Dr. Andre Leu, International Director, Regeneration International (Australia)

Dr. Juan Albaladejo - CSIC (Spanish Scientific Research Council) (ES)

Prof. Dr. Maria Amélia Martins-Loução - cE3c (Centre for Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Changes), CHANGE - (Global Change and Sustainability Institute) (PT)

Prof. Dr. Michele Pisante, Chair, Agronomy and Crop Sciences Research and Education Center, University of Teramo (IT)

Prof. Dr. Jean-Pierre Sarthou (agronomy-agroecology), Biodiversity and Environment Research Center, Toulouse National Polytechnic Institute, University of Toulouse (FR)

Dr. Isam Bashour, Professor of Soil Science and Plant Nutrition, American University of Beirut, (Lebanon)

Prof. Marc-André SELOSSE, Muséum National d'Histoire naturelle and Institut Universitaire de France (Paris), Universities of Gdansk (Poland) and Kunming (China), French Academy of Agriculture (FR)

Prof. Dr. George Zalidis, School of Agriculture, Faculty of Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Environment, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki 54123 (EL)

Prof. Pascal Boivin. Department of Agronomy. University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Western Switzerland (CH)

Elisabeth Bücking, PhD (Dr. rer. nat.) Soil Microbiologist. Forestry Research Institute Baden-Württemberg/Germany. Retired (DE)

Dr. Vera Porwollik, Division of Soil Science, Albrecht- Daniel -Thaer-Institute, Humboldt-University zu Berlin (DE)

Prof. Dr. Ir. Erik Mathijs, Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences, KU Leuven (BE)

Dr. Helena Cristina Serrano. Centre for Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Changes (cE3c), & Global Change and Sustainability Institute (CHANGE) (PT)

Dr. Rok Mihelič, University of Ljubljana, Biotechnical Faculty, and President of Slovene Association for Conservation Agriculture (SACA) (SI)

Michel Duru, chargé de mission à INRAE (FR)

Dr. Olivier Husson, Agroecologist, CIRAD, PERSYST Departement, AIDA research unit (FR)

Prof. Cláudia Costa, Food4Sustainability CoLab (F4S) (PT)

Dr. David P. M. Lam, Leuphana University Lüneburg, Social-Ecological Systems Institute (DE)

Professor Amir Kassam, School of Agriculture, Policy and Development, University of Reading (UK)

Dr. Alice Nunes, Centre for Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Changes (cE3c), & Global Change and Sustainability Institute (CHANGE) (PT)

Associate Professor. Dr Emmanouil M. Kabourakis, Laboratory of Olive, Vine and Agroecological Production Systems, Department of Agriculture, Hellenic Mediterranean University, Heraklion, Crete (EL)

Prof. Dr. Michael Weiß, Steinbeis Innovation Center, Organismal Mycology and Microbiology, Tübingen (DE)

Dr. Olivier Ejderyan, Department of Food System Sciences, FiBL Switzerland (CH)

Sonja Medwedski, soil scientist and author of "Die Stimme des Bodens" (DE)

Elizabeth Whitlow, Regenerative Organic Alliance (USA)

Johannes Kisser, alchemia-nova - institute for circular economy & nature-based solutions (AT)

Prof.dr. Johan Bouma, formerly Wageningen University (NL)

Alexandra Langlais, Research Director of CNRS, Faculty of law of Rennes (FR)

Maria Fritz, Managing Director of Impact Hub Karlsruhe (DE)

Marius Monen, program manager robotization for sustainable agriculture, Avans University of Applied Sciences, Breda (NL)

Prof. Carmelo Dazzi, President of the European Society for Soil Conservation (IT)

Government Associations

ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability, European Secretariat (DE)

Civil Society & Health, Nature and Water Associations

European Environmental Bureau (BE)

Stichting BirdLife Europe (BE)

World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) European Policy Office (BE)

Slow Food Europe (BE)

NABU (Naturschutzbund Deutschland e.V.) (DE)

Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland e.V. (BUND) (DE)

European Land and Soil Alliance (ELSA) (DE)

ECOS - Environmental Coalition on Standards (BE)

Pesticide Action Network Europe (PAN Europe) (BE)

Wetlands International Europe (NL)

European Compost Network (ECN) (BE)

Eurosite - the European Land Conservation Network (NL)

Legambiente ONLUS (IT)

Ecologistas en Acción (ES)

France Nature Environnement (FR)
CEEweb for Biodiversity (CEEweb) (HU)
BirdLife Austria (AT)
Sociedade Portuguesa para o Estudo das Aves - SPEA /Birdlife (PT)
Sociedad Española de Ornitología - SEO/BirdLife (ES)
BirdLife Cyprus (CY)
BirdLife Sverige (SE)
Lipu BirdLife Italia (IT)
Polish Society for the Protection of Birds, BirdLife Poland (PL)
Stiftung Natur und Landwirtschaft
Fundacja Strefa Zieleni (PL)
Deutscher Naturschutzring e.V. (DE)
Natuurpunt (BE)
Fédération SEPANSO (FR)
Fundatia ADEPT Transilvania (RO)
Schutzgemeinschaft Deutscher Wald e. V. (SDW) (DE)
Koalicja Żywa Ziemia [Living Earth Coalition] (PL)
reNature Foundation (NL)
Hellenic Ornithological Society (EL)
Canopea asbl (BE)
Compassion in World Farming EU (BE)
Sociedade Portuguesa de Ecologia - SPECO (PT)
Avalon Foundation (NL)
World Future Council (DE)
Pour une Agriculture du Vivant (FR)
Soil Association (UK)
GEOTA - Grupo de Estudos de Ordenamento do Território e Ambiente (PT)
Melanie Batista (PT)
The Zoöconomic Institute (NL)
Voedsel Anders (NL)
European Cave Protection Commission of the Fédération Spéléologique Européenne (LU)
Zielone Wiadomości (Green News) (PL)
Fundacja Zielone Światło (PL)

“Dobrze” Food Cooperative (PL)
Interessengemeinschaft gesunder Boden e.V. (DE)
Verband der deutschen Höhlen- und Karstforscher e.V. / German Speleological Federation (DE)
Bundesverband Boden e.V. (German Soil Association e.V.) (DE)
Bond Beter Leefmilieu (BE)
Deutscher Tierschutzbund e.V. (DE)
2000m2 - The Global Field Project, Selina Tenzer (DE)
Verein für regenerative Landwirtschaft e.V. (Soil Alliance) (DE)
Regenerate Forum gGmbH (DE)
OLIVE Leaf Foundation (OLF) (UK)
FOUR PAWS International (BE)
AECSAS - Associação técnica para o Estudo de Contaminação de Solo e Água Subterrânea (PT)
Associação Terra Sintrópica (PT)
European Circular Bioeconomy Policy Initiative (BE)
Life Terra foundation (NL/ES)
Ecole d'Agroécologie Voyageuse (FR)
Association of Cattle Breeders "Pasture" (Stowarzyszenie Hodowców Bydła "Pastwisko") (PL)
Polish Agroforestry Association (Ogólnopolskie Stowarzyszenie Agroleśnictwa) (PL)
Commonland (NL)
ARCHE NOAH (AT)
IAWR - International Association of Waterworks in the Rhine Basin (DE)
Klimapraxis gUG (DE)
Federazione Nazionale Pro Natura (IT)
CambiamoAgricoltura Coalition (IT)
Liga para a Protecção da Natureza - LPN (PT)
The House of Agroecology (BE)
Farm-Food-Climate/ProjectTogether (DE)

Soil Health Foundations & Impact Start-ups, Consulting and Finance

Soil Heroes (NL)
Dr. Paul LUU, Executive Secretary International "4 per 1000" Initiative (Soils for Food Security and Climate) (FR)
Soil Capital (BE)
Climate Farmers gUG

Resoilutions (DE)
Ecosia GmbH (DE)
Alganize.de (DE)
TerraTerre by Agoterra (FR)
GENESIS Soil Health (FR)
Gaïago (FR)
PUR Projet (FR)
The Landbanking Group, Munich (DE)
AgriCircle AG (CH)
Pedro de Liñán, Biome Makers S.L. (ES)
Agreena ApS (DK)
Moringa Wize (NL)
Esférico (ES)
Klim GmbH (DE)
Seqana GmbH (DE)
Sustainable AG / Soil & More Impacts (DE)
New Foundation Farms (UK)
Terra Genesis
Soilify (DE)
Pangaio Living Soil M.IKE (EL)
María Anaya Romero, Evenor-Tech, SLU (ES)
Francisco José Blanco Velázquez, Evenor-Tech, SLU (ES)
Félix González Peñaloza, Evenor-Tech, SLU (ES)
Mark Aink & Li Hoekstra Decade of Action, We are the ReGeneration (NL)
recelio association (CH)
Biome.Finance (NL)
ClimatePartner GmbH (DE)
Climate Cleanup Foundation (NL)
Soil & More Impacts, part of sustainable AG (DE)
ReGeneration (FR)
Grunt od Nowa Foundation (PL)
Michele Bandecchi, SmartCloudFarming GmbH (DE)
BMW Foundation Herbert Quandt (DE)

reNature (NL)
Ybyra ´ Solutions (FR)
Lenteland (NL)
Sara Roversi, Future Food Institute (IT)
Dr Allen McHugh, Regenerative Agriculture Asia (Thailand)
Merijn Dols, NOW Partners (NL)
Interbalkan Environment Center (i-BEC) (EL)
Arizona Muse, founder of DIRT.charity (UK)
BioHöfe Stiftung (DE)
Schweisfurth Stiftung (DE)
Georgius Consultancy, Pieter Jan Georgius Consultant Reg.Ag. (NL)
Polish Chamber of Organic Food (PL)
Organic Services GmbH, Gerald A. Herrmann (DE)
Stiftung Lebensraum, Mensch Boden Wasser Luft (DE)
Ricion AG (DE)
Kompetenzzentrum Boden und regenerative Landnutzung (DE)
Stiftung Zukunftsland (DE)
United Sustainability GmbH (DE)
Volterra Ecosystems (ES)
Standard Deviation (FR/CH)
Vidacycle (Chile)
REGENERATIV.ORG (DE)
Hiddenland.de (DE)
LandLäb
Lebendiger Lernort Arensneest e.V. (DE)
Expedition Klimalandschaft/BWL Brandenburg (DE)
Verbos Business Development (NL)
Zabala Innovation Consulting S.A (ES)
Zukunftsstiftung Landwirtschaft (DE)
Famtastisch Stiftung (DE)
Metabolic (NL)

Business Coalitions & Food Industry, Food Retail and Pharma

One Planet Business for Biodiversity, International Business Coalition (CH)

Capitals Coalition, International Business Coalition

Unilever (NL)

HelloFresh Deutschland SE & Co. KG (DE)

HiPP GmbH & Co. Vertrieb KG (DE)

Nestlé (CH)

Eosta BV Organic Fruits & Vegetables, *Henk Zoutewelle* (NL)

Danone (FR)

Arla Foods amba (DK)

McCain Foods (Canada)

Weleda AG (CH)

Block Foods AG (DE)

Foodmills B.V.

Rhyzo (PT)

followfood GmbH (DE)

fairfood Freiburg GmbH (DE)

Estandon Coopérative en Provence (FR)

Nutrition & Santé (FR)

Ideel Garden (FR)

WirMarkt Supermarkt Hamburg eG (DE)

Mr. Paul Polman, Business leader, Campaigner, Co-author of "Net Positive" (UK)

Le Petit Ballon (FR)