



Burson•Marsteller

Strategy for the protection and sustainable use of soil

Last updated in October 2010

Latest Developments

On 23 September, the Joint Research Center (JRC) published a "Soil Atlas". The atlas, the first initiative of its kind, is an indicator-based map which identifies potential threats to soil biodiversity. The aim is for the atlas to guide legislators in forming and implementing initiatives protecting soil. Additionally, the atlas provides the wider public with information on the importance of soil in maintaining ecosystems.

The publication of the atlas is an important step to creating the science basis needed to tackle the issue of biodiversity loss. It was an effort coordinated by the JRC but input was received by academia, industry and institutions such as the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

[JRC Soil Biodiversity Atlas](#)

Following the publication of the Atlas, Italian Conservative MEP Oreste Rossi submitted a question to the Council regarding the alarming state of soil biodiversity. As revealed by the Atlas, soil biodiversity is at great risk in many areas such as the United Kingdom, the Benelux countries and Northern France. He asked whether the Council intends to apply pressure to Member States to coordinate their efforts in this respect.

[MEP Question on Soil Biodiversity](#)

The JRC will continue focusing on soil issues as it is currently compiling a "chemical content map of EU land" which will be part of a major survey of EU land cover and usage. It is noteworthy, that Romania and Bulgaria will not be participating in the survey on the soil's chemical content. According to the JRC, the analysis of the samples collected will be completed by June 2011.

This sampling may become a regular part of the monitoring soil resources in the EU. In this respect, it will provide valuable information for the climate change and biodiversity debate while it may also provide arguments in favour of an EU directive on soil protection.

[Link to Euractiv article on "Chemical Map" of Europe](#)

Impact for golf management

- Course management
- Prevent soil degradation

Background



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On 1 June, the Environment Commissioner, Janez Potočnik announced that there will be a conference held on 23-24 September on *'Soil, climate change and biodiversity: where do we stand?'* hosted by the European Commission. The conference will see the participation of scientists and researchers who will report on the latest scientific findings concerning issues such as the amount of carbon stored in European soils, the role agricultural and forestry practices can play in climate change mitigation and biodiversity protection, and the important function that soil biodiversity plays in the ecosystem. Under the title "Soil, climate and biodiversity: synergies and opportunities" a roundtable discussion will gather key policy players from international and European institutions.

The conference will be the occasion to present the study "Soil biodiversity: functions, threats and tools for policy makers" carried out on behalf of the Environment Directorate-General and will launch the European Atlas of Soil Biodiversity being prepared by the Joint Research Centre.

The conference will inform the debate at European level on the best course of action for supporting the Soil Thematic Strategy and its accompanying legislative proposal adopted by the European Commission in September 2006.

[Soil, climate change and biodiversity: where do we stand?](#)

[Study on "Soil biodiversity: functions, threats and tools for policy makers"](#)

[European Atlas of Soil Biodiversity](#)

[Soil Thematic Strategy](#)

Links

Link to DEFRA website and "Save our Soils" Press Release:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/news/2009/090924b.htm>

[Link to the "Green Week" homepage.](#)

Link to EC Press Release: "Climate change: Commission dishes the dirt on the importance of soil"

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/09/353&type=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework for the protection of soil and amending directive 2004/35/ec

Environment: strategy for the protection and sustainable use of soil (amend. direct. 2004/35/EC)

Thematic Strategy for Soil Protection