

Compost and Digestate in the Circular Bioeconomy: Healthy Soil for Healthy Life



Thursday 30th June 2022, 15:00 – 17:00 CEST

Hosted by MEP Sarah Wiener

Vice-Chair of the European Parliament Intergroup on 'Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development'

Steadily and alarmingly, soil resources are depleting faster than the nutrients can be recycled. If this trajectory does not change, soil erosion, combined with the effects of climate change, will present a huge risk to global food security over next decades.

Simultaneously, despite the adoption of climate, environmental and resource efficiency policies have been adopted, contemporary societies consume more raw materials yearly than what planet Earth can regenerate over an one-year time. Therefore, the need to decouple economic growth from resource use is not a matter of if, but a matter of when, as all European countries are required to recycle 55 % of household waste by 2025, 60 % by 2030 and 65% by 2035, implement separate collection or source separation of bio-waste by 2023, cut at least by 40 % the greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, and achieve soil health by sustainable land management and soil restoration by 2050.

Towards this direction, governments should develop programs aimed at stopping land degradation processes and bringing degraded lands back into production, of which recycled organic matter application should be a key component.

The development of separate collection schemes for bio-waste and high-quality recycling has made available a large quantity of mature, safe and healthy compost and digestate estimated to be in the region of 12 to 16 million tonnes every year across Europe. Compost and digestate are effective soil improvers, however, farmers struggle to use them properly for technical and economic reasons.



During this event organized under the umbrella of the European Parliament Intergroup on 'Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development' in collaboration with the European Compost Network (ECN), experts will report on the role bio-waste plays in the circular bioeconomy, to produce high-quality compost and digestate-based products being used in sustainable agricultural management systems. The aim is to open the debate on the need for a renovated attention to soil quality, soil health and soil fertility at national, regional and European level in relation to the Soil Health Law, the Common Agricultural Policy and the initiative on Sustainable Carbon Cycles in relation to a circular economy in Europe.

FINAL AGENDA

- **15:00 – 15:10:** Opening remarks by **MEP Sarah Wiener**, Vice-Chair of the European Parliament Intergroup on 'Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development'
- **15:10 – 15:15:** Introductory remarks on "From bio-waste to high quality recycled organic products" by **Kristel Vandenbroek** (Chair of ECN)
- **15:15 – 15:30:** Presentation on 'Compost and Digestate in the Circular Bioeconomy: Sustainable Carbon Cycles and Healthy Soils' presented by **Dr. Jane Gilbert**, ISWA WG Chair 'Biological treatment of Waste' and former ECN Chair
- **15:30 – 16:15:** Panel discussion with the participation of:
 - **Silvija Aile**, Deputy Head of B3 Unit "From Waste To Resources", DG ENV, European Commission
 - **Enzo Favoino**, Scientific Co-ordinator, Zero Waste Europe
 - **Alberto Confalonieri**, Task Group Chair on 'Soil & Organic Matter', ECN
 - **Henk Vooijs**, Market Development Consultant, Novamont
 - **Sabine Houot**, Researcher, INRAE
 - **Arnaud Schwartz**, Rapporteur of NAT Opinion on the EU Soil Strategy for 2030, European Economic and Social Committee
- **16:15 – 16:25:** Reactions from MEPs (5' per speaker):
 - **MEP Elsi Katainen**
 - **MEP Manuela Ripa**
- **16:25 – 16:55:** Q&A session with the audience
- **16:55 – 17:00:** Closing remarks by **MEP Maria Noichl** (video-message intervention)



About S.O.S. Soil Initiative:

This **international initiative** S.O.S. SOIL – *Save Organics in Soil*, led by the European Compost Network (**ECN**) and the Italian Composting and Biogas Association (**CIC**), aims to highlight the importance of soil organic matter to **encourage policy makers** to develop instruments to **move Europe towards implementing sustainable, climate proof soil management practices**.

The **main Priority Goals** of the S.O.S. SOIL Initiative is to:

- **Increase** Soil organic matter in arable soils
- **Encourage** a more efficient management of nutrients on agricultural land
- **Protect** the existing stock of carbon in soils
- **Minimize** further losses of carbon from cultivated carbon rich soils

<https://www.saveorganicsinsoil.org/>

About ECN:

The **European Compost Network** is a membership organisation with 66 members from 27 European Countries. Members include all European bio-waste organisations and their operating plants, research, policy making, consultants and authorities. Via the member organisations, ECN represents more than 4500 experts and plant operators with more than 45 million tonnes of biological waste treatment capacity.

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