

Живите лаборатории – надеждни решения за опазване здравето на почвата

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Life on Earth depends on healthy soils, which are at the foundation of our food systems. Soil provides clean water and habitats for biodiversity, while at the same time contributing to resilience to climate change.

Unfortunately, according to recent research, from 60 to 70 % of soils in the EU are “ailing”, i.e. their health status is completely degraded. Among the main problems affecting soil are erosion, loss of biodiversity, loss of fertility and organic matter content.

Soil is a fragile resource that must be carefully managed and protected for future generations. The formation of just one centimetre of soil can take hundreds of years, while soil loss can occur within seconds, for example

after an extreme rainstorm or an industrial accident.

The EU Mission for Soil Health "EU Soil Mission" is one of the novelties in the research and innovation programme "Horizon Europe" for 2021 - 2027. A key element of this mission is the establishment of 100 living labs that will enable the transition to healthy soil across the territory of the Union.

The living labs for soil health protection are initiatives targeting researchers, farmers, foresters and representatives of professional associations, advisers, land managers and owners, specialists in urban and spatial development, food and bioeconomy companies, consumer associations, local communities, cultural and creative industries, citizens, civil and public organisations, including NGOs and representatives of government.

The National Event for Sustainable Soils NATI00NS brought together scientists and experts in Sofia on 21 June 2024. Participants from the Agricultural Academy were Assoc. Prof. Dr. Gergana Kuncheva and Chief Assistant Maria Ivanova from the "Nikola Pushkarov" Institute of Soil Science, Agrotechnologies and Plant Protection. The highlights of the event, held in the capital, were the EU Mission for Soil, the living labs and the applications for living labs in the country.

The aim of the bilateral European project is to establish a soil living lab in Bulgaria, as part of a total of 100 in Europe. The living lab will comprise participants from different regions of the country and farmers with different crops and scales of land and crop production. It will also be open to participants engaged in composting and the production of natural fertilizers for soil enrichment, as well as institutes of the Agricultural Academy for the preservation of knowledge and skills.