

Highlights from
Soil is Life, is Food, is Future

Round table - 28 June 2021



Forum Nazionale
**SALVIAMO IL
PAESAGGIO**
DIFENDIAMO I TERRITORI



**#ALL4
CLIMATE
ITALY
2021**

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**The complete recording of the Round Table
on YouTube and the videos made available
by the event:**

Complete recording

<https://youtu.be/vnExBaT8PzM>

Video "I am the soil" - Riccardo Mei

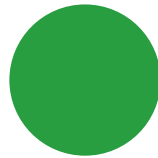
<https://youtu.be/kMpOHMLmjD8>

Video "Lumbricus terrestris" - Barbara Geiger

https://youtu.be/3_dz30F7I5Y

**Proceedings of the event are available upon request to
suolo.europa@gmail.com**





Highlights from “Soil is Life, is Food, is Future” Round table - 28 June 2021

The Italian Save the Landscape Forum, managed by its partner association #lasolastrada, organised a multi-stakeholder online round table on June 28. The event is included in the list of events for the "All4Climate - Italy 2021" Program, under the aegis of the Italian Ministry of the Environment, co-organiser - with Great Britain - of the Conference of the Parties (COP26) on Climate.

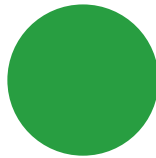
The complexity of soil involves many soil actors with different interests. The difficulty lies in understanding each actor's needs, and converging towards a common vision regarding the protection of soils to halt their degradation. Thus, the round table aimed at creating a dialogue between different soil users to establish common points to be addressed to the COP26.

A representative of each of the following sectors attended the round table: farmers, organic farmers, builders, unions, planners, local and regional administrators, civil society organisations, private industry, food industry, researchers, artists and European and international institutions.

A 'pristine' dialogue was possible and constructive and it allowed the emergence of a new paradigm for preserving soils based on the following points:

a) Soil Policy is a key political issue that needs binding measures

- I. Soil policy: there is no more time to lose and we cannot be patient. As a valid reference also for many other countries in the world, we need an EU policy on soil, where the equation climate justice = social justice must lead the forthcoming dialogue.
- II. Soil is a key policy issue: unfortunately, land use is not often related to soil's characteristics. Soil must become a key political issue, as such it must be considered in the choices that consider comparatively the potential uses in the planning and drafting of future regulations.
- III. Binding soil measures: there is an urgent need for binding concrete measures based on scientific data, they already exist as "voluntary" measures (FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Soil Management). Binding measures have to be used also to channel investments.



b) Decent jobs and living conditions in agriculture

Decent jobs in agriculture is a theme directly linked to sustainable soil management as indicated by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It includes immigration and immigrants' integration (no slavery), decent working conditions, gender equity, and child protection.

c) Soil is a living laboratory

It is a whole: from biodiversity to ecosystem services.

Soils are not all the same, they have different properties because of their different development and hence provide different ecosystem services.

Nevertheless, all soils must be protected and conserved through a sustainable management taking into account their particularities and potential uses.

The reference policies must consider these differences.

d) Stop land fragmentation and concentration

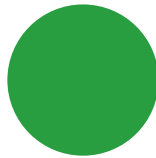
There is a need for a strong monitoring system to preserve the right to access the land (tailored to different socio-economic situation) and to stop land speculation that displaces the people living in the area.

e) Sustainable soil management practices

Sustainable soil management practices have to overturn the present situation and become the rule not the exception.

Agroecology, biological agriculture, regenerative agriculture, organic agriculture, non-industrial agriculture are all examples of sustainable soil management practices that can be adopted.

Convergence of the agricultural political agenda and of the nature and climate political agenda is crucial to avoid inconsistencies and to prevent negative effects on soil health, all of which must include sustainable management and protection of soils.



f) Importance of farmers

- I. Farmers are not carbon traders but food producers. Increasing soil organic carbon must be seen as a means to improve overall soil health and consequently food production. The ultimate goal should not be the carbon market, but rewarding farmers who adopt sustainable soil management practices aimed at improving soil health and maintaining the provision of ecosystem services.
- II. Importance of horizontal transfer of knowledge from farmers to farmers and from farmers to civil society: reinforcement of communication and joint work between extension services and farmers; strengthen the transfer of knowledge from farmers to civil society and facilitate the exchange of needs and solutions. Existing national and international mechanisms and programmes can help achieve this goal.

g) Importance of the stakeholders dialogue

Respecting farmers and their role is fundamental to maintaining food security and nutrition as indicated by International Treaty (FAO Farmers' Rights). There is the urgent need to balance the needs of all actors concerned by soils, and for this we have to trust farmers and their associations. Consequently, farmers and small and medium sized farms should be considered as the implementing actors of all actions together with other soil stakeholders.

h) Urbanising without sealing

Respect the rules for where to build as indicated by soil scientists and promote the redevelopment of abandoned and brownfield sites. However, de-sealing is not a 'precept'; options for wasteland reclamation must be envisaged.

i) Education

Education from primary school to university must include tailored courses on soil science aiming at raising awareness of the meaning of the soil for life. Field visits to farms and construction areas must be included.

l) Control of food chain

Measures to avoid losses throughout the production cycle (from the field, stocking, transport, and sale to the final consumer); improving diets (reduce animal production); increasing local production and consumption; and maintaining decent prices for producers are all components of correct soil conservation and sustainable management.

The context

The multifunctional nature of soil and land resources and competing demands on them merit close scrutiny. There is a common understanding that soil, as a limited and non-renewable resource at high risk of degradation, has to be preserved.

The European Union (EU), with the *Green Deal for Europe* (launched in 2019), created new conditions for preserving soils for future generations and concretely fighting climate change.

In this regard, soils play a pivotal role, as reflected in agricultural policy, the Farm to Fork strategy, the Biodiversity strategy, the law on Climate, and other related environmental policies.

The EU also indicated in its roadmap to a resource-efficient Europe its aim to achieve no net land take by 2050 as well as committing to land degradation neutrality by 2030. Finally, the European Commission has launched an online public consultation on the development of a new EU Soil Strategy.

All this creates the conditions for a new specific soil strategy model to be addressed to COP26.

The round table participants

The complexity of soil touches many soil actors with different interests.

The difficulty lies in understanding the each actor's needs, and converging towards a common vision regarding the protection of soils to halt their degradation and consumption.

The representatives of different sectors will attend the round table and will raise awareness on the soil and provide possible solutions to reverse the current trend of soil degradation and consumption that affects all EU Member States.

The sectors that have been identified and invited are industrial farmers, organic farmers, builders, land tenure, unions, planners, local and regional administrators, civil society organisations, private industry, food industry, researchers, and European and international institutions.

The round table will be recorded and a related publication will be produced, subject to agreement from every speaker.



Soil is Life, is Food, is Future

Round Table Programme

A - Introduction

- * Welcome by Organisers - **Maurizia Punginelli** - #lasolastrada
- * European Commission - **Andrea Vettori** - DG Environment
- * Technical rules for Round Table - **Dorelia Lipsa** - #lasolastrada

B - ROUND TABLE

Moderator - **Edward Robinson**
Founder and Editor 'Economy, Land and Climate Insight'

Soil problems and solutions:

- * Land Tenure - **Evelin Jürgenson**
PhD, Associate Professor at Estonian University of Life Sciences
- * International Institutions - **Ronald Vargas**
FAO - Global Soil Partnership
- * EU Parliament - **Eleonora Evi** - *Member of Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI)*
- * European Farmers and Farm workers - **Attila-Miklos Szocs-Boruss**
European Coordination Via Campesina
- * Biological farmers - **Eric Gall**
IFOAM Organics International
- * Private industry - **Florence Jeantet**
Managing Director - OP2B One Planet Business for Biodiversity
- * Builders - **Paul Cartuyvels**
President ECTP - European Construction Technology Platform
- * Local Administrators - **Matilde Casa**
Mayor of Lauriano (Torino)
- * Unions - **Arnd Spahn** - *Political Secretary Agriculture Sector EFFAT European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions*
- * Farmers - **Sarah Singla**
APAD Association for the Promotion of Sustainable Agriculture
- * Research - **Eleonora Bonifacio**
Vice-president, Italian Society of Pedology (SIPe)

INTERVENTIONS by floor participants

I AM THE SOIL

Video by **Riccardo Mei**
Save The Landscape Forum

C - ROUND TABLE

Recommendation for COP26 - All speakers

INTERVENTIONS by floor participants

Lumbricus Terrestris

Video by **Barbara Geiger**

D - EMERGING CONVERGENCES

Comparative analysis by external commentators:

- * **Eduard Mueller** - *Common Earth, Roadmapping National-Scale Regeneration Working Group*
- * **Martina Comparelli**
Italian Spokesperson - Friday For Future
- * **Hannes Lorenzen**
President ARC 2020 - Agriculture and Rural Convention
- * **Barbara Geiger**
Actress, Fräulein Brehms-Tierleben

E - Comments by speakers and by the floor participants

F - Closing remarks - **Mario Catizzone**

SEG Referent, Save The Landscape Forum

N.B. A cartoonist will accompany the meeting with his drawings

To register:

<https://www.lasolastrada.it/registration/>

More details:

<https://www.lasolastrada.it/soil-is-life-is-food-is-future-28-06-2021/>

Documents suggested by the speakers:

<https://www.lasolastrada.it/suggested-documents/>