

European Soil Partnership Pillar 2 Summary

As a contribution to the implementation of elements under the ESP Pillar 2, a workshop was arranged in Bratislava in September by the JRC and the European Network for Soil Awareness (ENSA) entitled "ENSA 2017@Bratislava: Giving soils a voice!"

The workshop brought together around 50 participants from 18 countries, who had a common aim of raising awareness of the importance of soil. The meeting was a forum to exchange best practices and learn about what is happening across Europe in relation to soil awareness, education and outreach.

A key aspect of the meeting was how to deal with the implementation of the European Soil Partnership Plan of Action for Pillar 2 which addresses these issues.

The meeting in Bratislava addressed key actions, physical outcomes, possible contributors, timeline and budgetary requirements for the ESP Pillar 2 Action Plan as well as topics such as communication channels, World Soil Day events, support to EU and national soil policy development, engagement with extension services, scientific and technical cooperation and the need to demonstrate a positive return on soil investment.

The meeting included an address by Ing. Štefan Ryba, PhD. Director General Agriculture Section, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic, on the importance of soil education, especially in relation to advisory or extension services.

Presentations from the meeting are available on ESDAC.

<https://esdac.jrc.ec.europa.eu/networkcooperations/european-network-soil-awareness>

The main outcomes of the meeting included:

- a) Development of implementation strategies addressing local, regional, national and EU levels;
- b) Addressing agricultural aspects but also stressing broader ecosystem considerations;
- c) Development of a common portal for Pillar 2 activities, proposed under auspices of ESDAC, giving access to events (using a common template), best practices, newsletter; and a mailing list;
- d) Consideration to the IUSS Decade of Soils, but explore links to UNEP and FAO priorities. Develop link on education with UNESCO and DG Education;
- e) Focus on annual priorities (e.g. 2018 on pollution);
- f) Look to increase membership of group – target industrial elements and communication professionals;
- g) JRC to lead development of **booklet on best practices to accompany policy briefing** on need for investment on soil awareness, education and communication;
- h) ESP Pillar2 meeting should be planned for 2018 (now as part of JRC support to ESP);
- i) Next joint ENSA meeting Wageningen 2019.