

To:

Professor Jean-Pierre Bourguignon

***President of the European Research Council
Chair of the ERC Scientific Council***

Professor Klaus Bock

***Vice-President of the European Research Council
(Physical sciences and Engineering)***

Professor Eva Kondorosi

***Vice-President of the European Research Council
(Life Sciences)***

Professor Martin Stokhof

***Vice-President of the European Research Council
(Social Sciences and Humanities)***

Dear Sir, Dear Madam,

In recent years, the awareness that soil is a key and very complex natural resource has increased at all levels of society. Recently, the 68th UN General Assembly declared 2015 the International Year of Soils, with the aim of increasing awareness and understanding about the importance of soil for food security and essential ecosystem functions. Moreover, to build on this momentum and the extent to which civil society contributes on these issues, the International Union of Soil Sciences, at the end of 2015, proclaimed 2015-2024 to be the International Decade of Soils.

The Seventh Environment Action Programme, which entered into force on January 2014, recognises that soil degradation is a serious challenge. It aims to ensure that, in the coming years, land is managed sustainably in the European Union, soil is adequately protected and the remediation of contaminated sites is well underway. It also commits the EU and its Member States to increase efforts to reduce soil erosion, increase soil organic matter contents and remediate contaminated sites.

We believe that this is not enough and that such commitments must be followed by effective and positive actions to preserve the multi-functionality of soil and its role in environmental equilibria and in human health and welfare.

We, the Presidents of the European and National Scientific Societies listed below, representing over 15,000 soil scientists that belong to European universities, research agencies, government bodies, higher education, science, public non-governmental organizations, and business, are submitting to you the petition below. We count on your support to establish an ERC panel specifically dedicated to the field of "Soil Science" in its broad meaning.

PETITION

The Presidents of the European and national scientific societies listed below, representing over 15,000 soil scientists belonging to European universities, research agencies, government bodies, higher education bodies, public non-governmental organizations and business,

given

that the 68th UN General Assembly endorsed the request from the Kingdom of Thailand for the proclamation of the ‘International Year of Soils 2015’ to serve as a platform for raising awareness about the importance of soil for food security and essential ecosystem functions.

stressing

- the importance of sustainable soil management as the basis for food systems, fuel and fibre production, essential ecosystem functions and better adaptation to climate change for present and future generations;
- the importance of the multi-functionality of soils on environmental equilibria and human health and welfare all over the world;

identified

that the level of degradation of natural resources, and particularly soils, related to human pressure is becoming increasingly evident in all European countries;

considering

that the issues concerning the field of Soil Science should be considered within the domain of “Life Science” due to their strong links with food security, ecosystems functions and human health,

request that

the European Research Council

establish a unique and specific ERC panel dedicated to the field of “Soil Science”, under the Life Sciences domain. We put forward the following proposal for your attention:

LS9 Applied life Sciences and Non-Medical Biotechnology: Agricultural, animal, fishery, forestry food and soil sciences; biotechnology, genetic engineering, synthetic and chemical biology, industrial biosciences; environmental biotechnology and remediation.

LS9_x Soil Science

We are strongly convinced that a panel specifically dedicated to “Soil Science” will give soil the importance that it deserves as a fundamental resource to maintain the total quality of the environment and humankind, and will allow early career soil scientists to have a direct route through which to apply for ERC grants.

Logo	Society	President (Name and Signature)
	<p>European Society for Soil Conservation</p>	<p>Prof. Carmelo Dazzi</p> 
	<p>European Soil Partnership</p>	<p>Prof. Elena Havlicek</p> 
	<p>European Confederation of Soil Science Societies</p>	<p>Prof. Pascal Boivin</p> 
	<p>European Society for New Methods in Agricultural Research</p>	<p>Prof. Vlado Licina</p> 
	<p>European Geosciences Union Division on Soil System Science</p>	<p>Prof. Lily Pereg</p> 
	<p>Soil Science Society of AUSTRIA</p>	<p>Dr. Andreas Baumgarten</p> 
	<p>Soil Science Society of BELGIUM</p>	<p>Prof. Seppe Deckers</p> 



Soil Science
Society of
BULGARIA

Prof. Metodi Teoharov



Soil Science
Society of
CROATIA

Prof. Marija Romić



Soil Science
Society of
**CZECH
REPUBLIC**

Prof. Bořivoj Šarapatka



Soil Science
Society of
ESTONIA

Prof. Alar Astover



Soil Science
Society of
FINLAND

Prof. Helena Soinne



Soil Science
Society of
FRANCE

Prof. Céline Collin Bellier



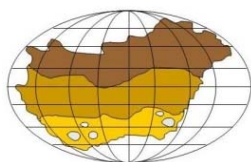
Soil Science
Society of
GERMANY

Prof. Georg Guggenberger



Soil Science
Society of
GREECE

Prof. Nicola Barbayiannis



Soil Science
Society of
HUNGARY

Prof. Tibor Tóth



Soil Science
Society of
ITALY

Prof. Anna Benedetti



Latvijas Augsnes zinātnes biedrība
Soil Science Society of Latvia

Soil Science
Society of
LATVIA

Prof. Raimonds Kasparinskis



Soil Science
Society of
LITHUANIA

Prof. Jonas Volungevicius



Soil Science
Society of
NETHERLANDS

Dr. Erik Cammeraat



Soil Science
Society of
POLAND

Prof. Zbigniew Zagórski



Soil Science
Society of
PORTUGAL

Prof. Carlos Alexandre



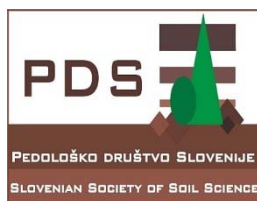
Soil Science
Society of
ROMANIA

Prof. Mihail Dumitru



Soil Science
Society of
SLOVAKIA

Prof. Jaroslava Sobocká



Soil Science
Society of
SLOVENIA

Prof. Borut Vrščaj



Soil Science
Society of
SPAIN

Prof. Jorge Mataix-Solera



Soil Science
Society of
UNITED KINGDOM

Prof. Wilfred Otten

