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Press release – 17 September 2016

Startup meeting of the campaign of #People4Soil in the Netherlands full of energy and inspiration

On September 14, 2016, the startup meeting of the campaign People 4 Soil was held in the Netherlands. This is a European Citizens' Initiative for specific legislation on soil protection.

The meeting was organized by the Dutch Sustainable Food Supply Foundation and was held at EOSTA / Nature and More, which previously launched the international campaign called 'Save our Soils'.

'[People 4 Soil](#)' is a free and open network of European NGOs, research institutes, farmers associations and environmental groups. We are very worried about the increasing degradation of soils both in the EU and at global level: erosion, sealing, loss of organic matter, compaction, salinisation, landslides and contamination have negative impacts on human health, food security, natural ecosystems, biodiversity and climate, as well as on our economy.

In my view it is not all to the farmers, but to the policy, which for decades has put the wrong focus in food production. Nowadays this focus is too much on expansion and intensification with larger buildings, heavier machinery and the use of poisons.



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This situation was accompanied by a slurry of rules, a necessity to protect the environment and the government (tax-wise). But these rules are palliatives that suffocate both smaller farmers in particular and our soil. The ecomodernists seem to be the ones who want to maintain this situation. "Let us farm as intensively as possible here, so that more nature remains in the rest of the world" is their mantra. In this, agricultural foremen and the government seem to follow them.

Furthermore, land is increasingly withdrawn from food production. Although, in recent decades, the European population has grown by 5%, in the same period, the surface soil covered (because, among others, urban expansion and paving) increased by 9%. Thus, annually, an area the size of Eastern and Southern Flevoland together is withdrawn from agriculture in the European Union.

This is just a sampling of the many facts that for the next twelve months will be in the limelight in the campaign of People 4 Soil.

The inaugural meeting was bubbling with inspiring ideas. Thereby, the important role of education was also mentioned. Teachers, pupils and students should be much more aware of the importance of proper care for the soil, a living ecosystem that is essential for human health and the environment. Healthy soil also requires a lot of supply of carbon and with good soil management environmentally harmful CO₂ emissions can be significantly reduced.

Bertus Buizer, National Coordinator of People 4 Soil for the Netherlands
[Sustainable Food Supply Foundation](#)

Photo credit: EOSTA

On the photo:

From left to right, standing: Durk Schroor ([Symphony of Soils](#)), Piet van IJzendoorn ([BD-Vereniging](#)), Dr. Jan Diek van Mansvelt ([Stichting Down2Earth](#)), Dr. Aad Termorshuizen ([SoilCares Research](#)), Jordy Stokhof de Jong ([Stichting Down2Earth](#)), Bertus Buizer ([Stichting Sustainable Food Supply](#)), Hiske Ridder ([ConPuls](#));

From left to right, seated: Ria Commandeur-Kesting ([Symphony of Soils](#)), Michaël Wilde ([EOSTA / Nature & More](#))