



Soil underpins 90% of all human food, fiber, and fuel and is essential for water and ecosystem health; there's even talk of a natural antidepressant in soil.

While soils are as essential to human society as air and water, soil degradation has not received nearly as much attention. Major problems in Europe include: loss of top-soil due to erosion or building activities, contamination, and acidification [1](#).

Soil deterioration by contamination is an important issue in central, western and northern Europe. For 12 EU countries, the estimated number of potentially contaminated sites adds up to 1,500,000, of which more than 300,000 have been identified. The huge number of existing contaminated sites is an enormous challenge for the next decades and will need appropriate legal instruments, innovative remediation technologies and practical financial instruments [2](#).

Globally, pressure on the world's soil resources and land degradation are threatening food security. In Africa, 500 million hectares of land have been affected by soil degradation and 75%



