



Newsletter

Winter 2025

Advancing participatory governance for soil health quality management: The legacy of the HuMUS project

The HuMUS final conference

Brussels, 21 November 2025



On Friday, 21 November 2025, 100 people gathered in Brussels at the European Committee of the Regions to celebrate the end of the three-year project Healthy Municipal Soils (HuMUS). The [HuMUS final conference](#), organised by the project coordinator [ANCI Toscana](#) and [Agroecology Europe](#), the partner leading its communication and dissemination efforts, marked a crucial point for the project, now coming to an end.

Under the title “**Participatory governance for Soil Health quality management: The legacy of the HuMUS project**”, the HuMUS consortium – hosted by the European Committee of the Regions – was delighted to welcome 100 stakeholders, including 25 speakers and several representatives of the [34 HuMUS pilots](#), showcased through 11 posters that illustrated the rich diversity and impact of the project’s work across and beyond Europe.

The HuMUS Final Conference brought together policymakers, soil stewards, municipalities, regional authorities, researchers, farmers, urban planners, and civil society to **share knowledge and outcomes from the three-year Horizon Europe project HuMUS**. The day offered a dynamic mix of formats, fostering dialogue and knowledge exchange, including keynote speeches from EU officials and soil policy experts, panel discussions featuring pilot sites and regional success stories, interactive Q&A sessions and the poster exhibition showcasing project activities and outcomes.

Among the interventions, the [Soilscape](#) project was presented by [UNESCO](#) and the [SOLO Soils for Europe](#) project by [PAN Europe](#).

As highlighted several times throughout the conference, HuMUS has **kick-started a transformation in local soil governance**, demonstrating how participatory, inclusive and replicable approaches can pave the way toward healthier soils and stronger communities. Over the last three years (2023-2025), **HuMUS has involved 18 partners from 8 European countries**, with **14 internal pilots and 20 external pilots**, selected via a Financial Support for Third Parties (FSTP) call, bringing the final number of Member States and Associated Countries involved to 16.

[Read the full article](#)

As shared in the closing remarks by Sandra Heinzelmann, Project Advisor at the [European Research Executive Agency \(REA\)](#): “HuMUS worked hard, with very dedicated members. The collaboration with other Mission Soil projects was also notable and very positive. HuMUS implemented what was promised – and even went beyond that. Be proud of that.”

This is only the beginning. The work continues and the commitment stays high even after the end of the project, to promote further diffusion of participatory soil governance at the local and regional levels in Europe.

Watch the recording of the final conference



Become a Soil Steward and learn from the 34 HuMUS pilots



Want to become a leader in local soil care and impress everyone with your soil health expertise? You can still enrol for free and take the Soil Steward Training!

Across 4 modules, you will learn what is soil health assessment and explore the state of the art of soil health policies and Participatory Soil Governance, including evidence on local Living Labs and Lighthouses.

This is your chance to make a difference for your local soils!

 [Start your training](#) now.

You'll learn from the 34 HuMUS pilots' local action on the ground, now with 20 new exclusive videos from the HuMUS Open Call pilots!

Once you finish the Course, you will receive a personalised Certificate accrediting you as HuMUS Soil Steward.

Ready to learn and serve your local soil health management community? Be part of the HuMUS Legacy.



START YOUR SOIL STEWARDSHIP JOURNEY

**The 34 HuMUS pilots are now
available on YouTube**



Discover the 14 Internal Pilot Cases developed by the HuMUS Consortium and the 20 External Pilot Cases awarded through the HuMUS Call for Proposals. All the videos introducing the pilots are now available on [Agroecology Europe's](#) YouTube channel.

From the Italian countryside to the mining regions of Romania and the Portuguese vineyards, the HuMUS pilots have advanced the HuMUS methodology and Territorial Management Agreement participatory processes across 16 Member States and Associated Countries.

Dive into the experiences of the pilots and hear about participatory soil health directly from them!

Watch the videos

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EUROSOIL 2025 - Seville, Spain



HuMUS was at [EUROSOIL 2025](#), and we brought participatory Soil Governance to the 5th EUSO Stakeholders Forum!

The HuMUS Project, together with the project coordinator Anci Toscana, had the honor to present at the EUROSOIL 2025 Conference in Seville from 8-12 September, during the 5th EUSO Stakeholders Forum, organised by the Joint Research Centre (JRC).

Our session, delivered by Francesco Molinari, “From Pilot Cases to Policies: The HuMUS Project Experience in Participatory Soil Governance” shared how local dialogues and pilot cases can be transformed into territorial agreements and real policy impact.

The HuMUS experience demonstrates a replicable pathway for transforming local action into broader policies. The participatory process itself ensures that policies are grounded in local realities and enjoy built-in support for implementation. We are proud to have contributed to the Mission Soil community and to exchange with colleagues across Europe on how to make soils healthier for future generations.



New study: Making the link between soil health and extreme weather events in and around Valencia



The Double Threat: How soil degradation exacerbates the impact of DANAs (Isolated High-Level Depressions) in Valencia

Published in [Revista CUNAL](#), the article “**La Doble Amenaza: Cómo la degradación del suelo valenciano exagera el impacto devastador de las DANAs**” highlights a crucial issue for the present and future of the Valencian Community: the link between soil health and the destructive force of extreme weather events. ([The full article is available here in Spanish](#)).

The authors (Francesco Molinari – ANCI Toscana; Francesco Filippi – Fundación Musol; Luis Roca Pérez – Universidad de Valencia) clearly show that **soil degradation is not only an environmental issue, but also a social and economic risk** for Valencia. This is exactly where the work of the [Humus Project](#) becomes relevant.

The Valencian Community, with a large expanse of fertile land bathed by the Mediterranean, cyclically faces the fury of **DANAs (Isolated High-Level**

Depressions), meteorological phenomena that unleash torrential rains with often catastrophic consequences. While the origin of these “cold drops” lies in complex atmospheric dynamics, a silent but crucial factor amplifies their destructive power: soil quality.

Photo credits: ANSA



[Read the full article and download the paper](#)

**HuMUS is featured on
the NBSOIL Project interactive
map!**



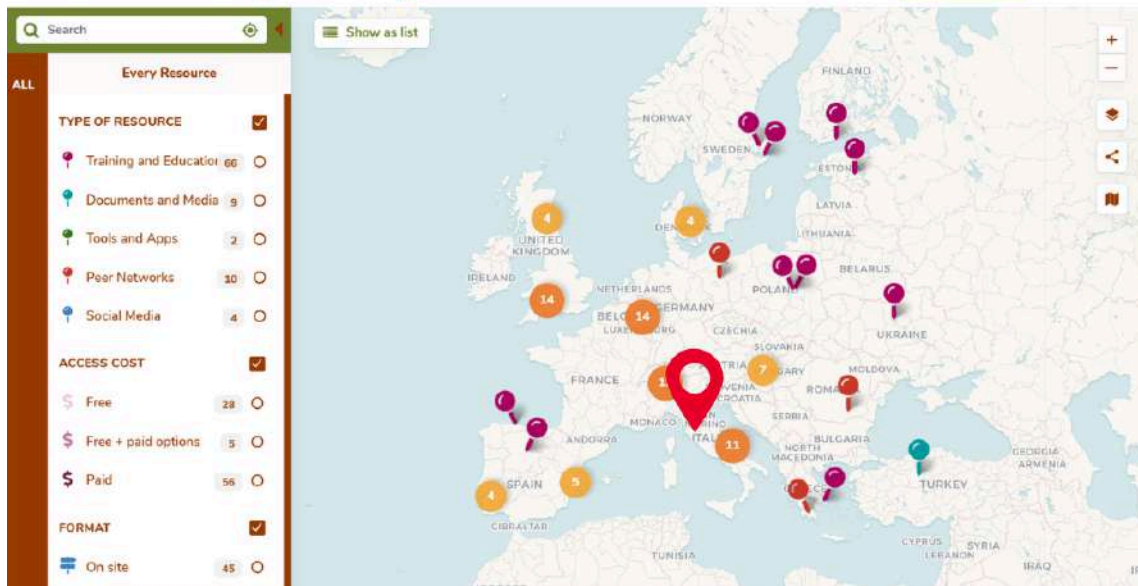
NBSOIL
Nature-based Solutions
for Soil Management

NBSOIL interactive map of knowledge resources for soil advisors

The map

Add A Resource

Log in



HuMUS has been included in the [NBSOIL Project](#) interactive map. This is a great example of collaboration between Horizon Europe Mission Soil projects, working together to promote soil health.

🔍 How to find us?

- Open the interactive [map](#)
- Zoom in on Italy, then on Florence (where HuMUS Coordinator Anci Toscana is based)
- There you'll find the HuMUS resources:

 Soil Steward Training Course

HuMUS developed a training program to empower Soil Stewards to facilitate regional dialogues on soil health, engaging non-specialist actors in decision-making processes.

Regional Soil Health Communities (RSHC)

Online communities on LinkedIn, thriving on shared knowledge. With a multi-actor approach, RSHCs involve participants from territorial dialogues to foster knowledge transfer.

Read more

The HuMUS pilot summaries are now online



HuMUS deployed the EU Soil Mission by creating collective spaces of constructive dialogue on soil health and soil quality threats, both inside and outside the consortium. The 34 HuMUS pilots adopted participatory governance methods and tools for soil quality and health governance in the territories involved. The pilot projects are experimental and time-bound local examples of the HuMUS methodology to implement participatory governance of soil health issues at municipal and regional levels.

HuMUS works with two sets of pilot projects:

- 20 Pilot projects from the [Open Call](#)
- 14 Pilot cases of consortium partners

By the end of the project, all the pilots delivered a signed co-created Territorial Management Agreement based on the [Territorial Management Agreement Template Guidelines](#).

All the pilots have also submitted a summary of their approach and activities in promoting participatory soil health governance in their territories. Check them



[Read the summaries](#)

HuMUS at the Mission Soil Week 2025 in Aarhus



The HuMUS consortium was part of a rich and inspiring exchange of ideas at the [Mission Soil Week 2025](#) in Aarhus, showcasing how European actors are coming together to make our soils healthier and our landscapes more resilient.

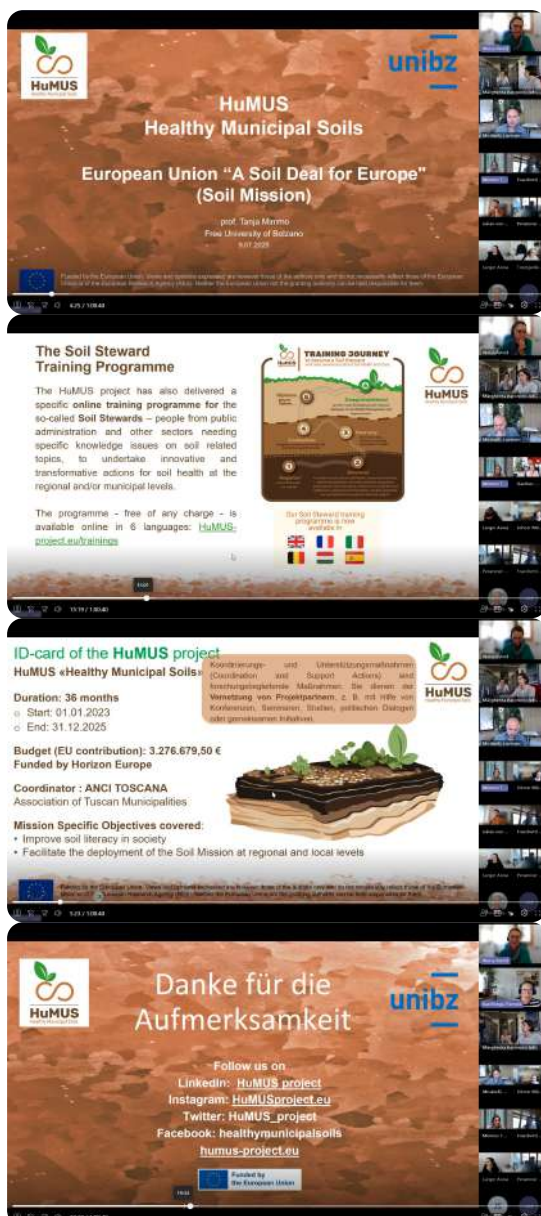
Held on 5 and 6 November, the event was organized by the Danish Ministry of Green Transition, Aarhus University, and the European Commission's DG for Agriculture and Rural Development, under the Danish Presidency of the Council of the EU for 2025. HuMUS partners joined 300 people in-person, while 900 more connected online.

This third edition of the Mission Soil Week took place at a crucial moment for European soil policy: the European Parliament and the Council of the EU

reached a provisional agreement on the EU Soil Monitoring and Resilience Directive, a key milestone towards protecting and restoring soils across Europe. The event brought together policymakers, researchers, farmers, land managers, businesses, and citizens to share knowledge and explore solutions for sustainable soil management. Discussions focused on the Soil Monitoring Directive and the role of healthy soils in sustainable multifunctional landscapes, with Denmark showcased as an inspiring example.

Read more

Highlights



HuMUS presented at the AKIS online event

Prof. Tanja Mimmo from the Libera Università di Bolzano, partner of the HuMUS Project, presented our initiative during the first AKIS online event held on July 9, 2025.

The event, organized by the AKIS group in Bolzano, brought together 22 participants from across the provinces of Bolzano and Trento, fostering an inspiring exchange on key rural development themes: biodiversity, water, and soil.

During the one-hour session, Prof. Mimmo introduced the HuMUS Project, highlighting our mission to promote sustainable soil management practices at the local and regional level.

Read more



The 3rd SWG Assembly Session gathered in Prizren

In September, the 63rd SWG RRD (Standing Working Group for Regional Rural Development in SEE) Assembly Session gathered in Prizren representatives from across the region to review progress and plan future activities.

Key highlights included updates on climate change adaptation in agriculture, sustainable forest management, wine policy, organic production, the HuMUS project and the [REVIVE](#) Interreg Euro-MED project.

The session set the course for stronger regional cooperation and joint actions in 2025 and beyond.

[Read more](#)



HuMUS was at the Agroecology Europe Forum 2025 in Malmö

Under the inspiring theme “Transformation in Action”, from 2-4 October HuMUS joined the movement for change with 400 people at the [Agroecology Europe Forum 2025](#) in Sweden, making sustainable food and farming and healthy soils in Europe a tangible reality.

Anna Frosini, from the AEEU organising committee and the HuMUS consortium, presented the project poster, showcasing the participatory process behind healthy European soils with the HuMUS Project. Agroecology Europe also invited participants to the HuMUS



Conference happening later in November in Brussels.

[Read more](#)



HuMUS replication event in Livorno (Tuscany)

At the end of October, HuMUS coordinator Anci Toscana took part in two important events within the European projects HuMUS and [ADAPTWISE](#): one in Livorno on 24 October, for a joint meeting between the two partnerships, and one in La Spezia, for a discussion on the progress of the ADAPTWISE communities.



In Livorno, a valuable discussion was held with citizens at the Circolo Arci Collinaia on the results of the soil sampling carried out in the ADAPTWISE pilot area and funded by the HuMUS project. The aim was to assess the soil's health status and identify the best interventions on urban green areas to increase their resilience, with the support of researchers from the Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies in Pisa.



[Read more](#)



HuMUS open replication event in Stuttgart

On 14 October, the HuMUS open Stuttgart replication event took place at the City of Stuttgart Winery, bringing together stakeholders for an inspiring evening focused on soil protection and the preservation of open spaces. The event was organised by Uli Ostarhild from the partner Ernährungsrat StadtRegion Stuttgart (ERSTR) and Juliane Stoye from the partner University of Hohenheim. HuMUS and its goals, challenges, and achievements were presented.

Attendees learned about a soil profile directly in the vineyard from soil experts, were introduced to DeliSoil soil improvers based on circular economy processes, and discussed the challenges of farming in urban environments. The evening concluded with informal exchange, highlighting the importance of healthy soils for sustainable food systems and resilient cities.

Read on in the Stuttgart
Regional Soil Health
Community group



SOILCRATES 3rd General Assembly in Granada

During the SOILCRATES annual General Assembly on 15-17 October in Granada, Spain, Marianne Hoogmoed from Louis Bolk Insituut hosted a workshop on participatory methods for engaging and activating local governments in the [SOILCRATES](#) Living Labs. The HuMUS methodology was presented thanks to the HuMUS partner Louis Bolk Insituut, that is also a partner in the Mission Soil SOILCRATES Living Lab, thereby ensuring exchange between the two Mission Soil projects. The event gathered around 50 stakeholders.

[Read more](#)



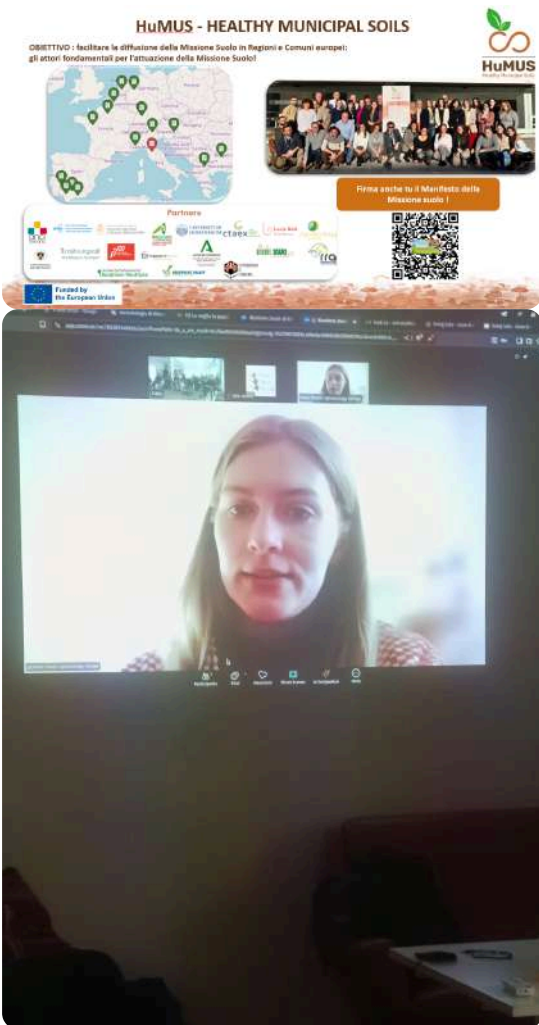
HuMUS open Stuttgart replication event and 1st Stuttgart Soil Day

The 1st Stuttgart Soil Day took place on Tuesday at the [Brodbeck family's organic farm](#) in Stuttgart-Möhringen. The event combined a field visit to a soil profile with expert talks on soil health, sustainable land management, and urban organic farming. Participants also learned about citizen-science soil research, urban biodiversity projects, and a new platform for sharing agricultural land. The day concluded with informal exchange and a shared meal prepared from freshly harvested ingredients. Around 60 attendees could learn about a soil profile soil from experts. The [ECHO](#) project informed about their citizen science



project and invited participants to do their own soil analyses.

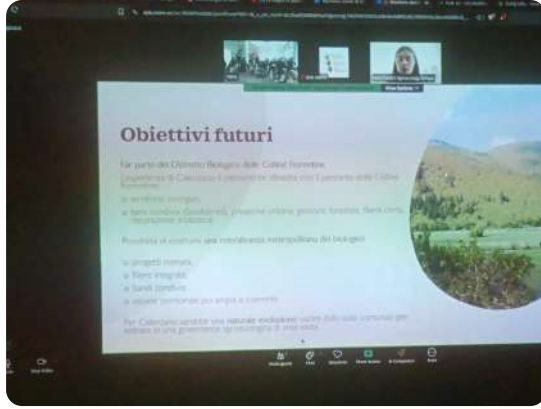
Read on in the Stuttgart Regional Soil Health Community group



Laboratory on Participatory Agroecology and Food Policies: Focus on Organic Districts in Florence

At the School on Participatory Agroecology and Food Policies organised by [Azione TerrAE](#) that took place in Florence from 21-23 November, Anna Frosini from the HuMUS partner Agroecology Europe presented the HUMUS methodology and results.

The three-day Laboratory focused on Organic Districts and participatory design methodologies, and the session brought together around 14 participants. The Calenzano Biodistrict, one of the consortium's pilot initiatives, was also presented. The event strengthened collaboration between HUMUS project partners and local stakeholders, fostering exchange and learning on bottom-up governance approaches and participatory agroecology practices.



[Read more](#)



Replication Soil Day in Brest

On 27 November, the HuMUS partner VEGEPOLYS VALLEY organised a day of sharing the results of the HuMUS project with Brest Métropole, in order to promote the replicability of good practices for soil preservation. These meetings brought together around 50 participants for presentations and collaborative workshops, and complemented the cluster's presence at Paysalia in Lyon.



Paysalia Fair in Lyon

HuMUS was present at the Paysalia Fair in Lyon from 2-4 December. The fair gathered around 40,000 visitors. Véronique Tosser and Joséphine de Lavigne from VEGEPOLYS VALLEY presented the HuMUS results and showcased the QR code on the VEGEPOLYS VALLEY stand linked to the soil steward training course.



[Read more](#)



Replication Soil Day in Nantes

On 5 December (World Soil Day), The HuMUS partner VEGEPOLYS VALLEY organised a day of sharing the results of the HuMUS project with Nantes Métropole, in order to promote the replicability of good practices for soil preservation. Attendees learned about soil health through the "soil fresque". The soil Fresquers informed civil servants about soil challenges and invited participant to think about their local situations. Results from the HuMUS project, methodology and pilots were presented.



[Read more](#)



[Read more](#)



World Soil Day 2025 in Siena

On 5 December, World Soil Day, Anci Toscana presented in Siena, a UNESCO World Heritage city, the results of the HUMUS project. Following opening remarks by Siena's councillor Barbara Magi, Marialuisa Dal Poz from the European Commission outlined the EU Soil Mission and the newly approved Soil Monitoring Directive. The representatives of ANCI Toscana Elena Conti and the project coordinator Annalaura Vannuccini highlighted the legacy of HuMUS and the future potential of its 34 pilot projects across 16 countries, including five in Tuscany. A focus session showcased the Siena pilot, and the event also introduced the [SoilScape Project](#), linking soil care with education and artistic expression through the "Soil Orchestras."

[Read more](#)





Thank you for being part of the HuMUS community!

“We are making the HuMUS family become a generation – and hopefully many generations.”

Astrid Hannes, Head of Projects at ERRIN (European Regions Research and Innovation Network) during the HuMUS Final Conference

Keep an eye on the HUMUS website for the last updates on the project results and success stories emerging from the pilots.

Together, we can keep cultivating the future of participatory healthy soil governance.

Stay updated on the HuMUS website



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