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New Master's Course in Soil Science at the Agricultural University in Plovdiv

Author(s): Растителна защита
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Soil is one of the most important natural resources, along with air and water, and its role is indispensable for the proper functioning of ecosystems. It contains vital nutrients that sustain various land covers and species (forests, pastures and agriculture); it regulates ground temperature, plays a key role in controlling emissions of various gases; it prevents air currents and flooding in water bodies through its capacity to retain and store water.

Ecosystems perform various functions that provide a viable environment and conditions for feeding and sheltering living organisms, as well as a medium for raising their offspring.

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Unfortunately, factors such as climate change, industrialisation due to rapid population growth, urbanisation, land misuse, and the increase of polluted waters inevitably lead to the reduction and/or extinction of species, endanger biodiversity and, consequently, reduce the resilience of ecosystems.

Soil represents the first step in the food chain that must be established to ensure healthy nutrition for the world's population and it forms the basis of food safety. Therefore, several universities are pooling their efforts to create and implement a Master's programme in Soil Science that will prepare young specialists in this vital subject.

The consortium of universities implementing the Erasmus Mundus Master's course in Soil Science is pleased to announce a call for applications for the fourth intake of students. The Master's course has been developed by four universities: Ondokuz Mayıs University - Turkey, University of Agriculture in Krakow - Poland, Agricultural University – Plovdiv, Bulgaria, and Jordan University of Science and Technology - Jordan.

The Master's programme in Soil Science (emiSS) has been established to meet the growing need for qualified specialists in this field. The programme integrates soil science (soil physics, chemistry, biology and hydrology, soil genesis and classification, soil pollution and reclamation), management (soil erosion and conservation, land use, planning and management, soil health and quality), fertility (fertilisers and fertilisation, soilless culture, composting and vermicompost), soil ecosystem (soil biodiversity, soil-plant-water relationships, carbon sequestration and storage in soil, etc.), intercultural competence and language skills.

Students from all over the world may study in the Master's course on the basis of a regional quota. So far, students from the Western Balkans and European countries have been enrolled.

The courses will be conducted in two different countries within the programme.

The curriculum includes 30 ECTS in the first semester at OMU-Turkey, and in the second semester 30 ECTS are allocated respectively between UAK-Poland or AU-Bulgaria.

All courses are taught in English.

Information about the Master's course and the application procedure can be found on the following pages:

https://emissmaster.omu.edu.tr/index.php

https://emissmaster.omu.edu.tr/apply/apply/42

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This is an excellent opportunity to study in a Master's course in Soil Science, fully funded under the Erasmus+ programme.

The deadline for submitting application forms is **28 February 2023**