



EU soil policy and the Soil Monitoring Law

5 December 2024
Brussels

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ENV.D1 Land Use & Management

State and outlook of the environment report by EEA

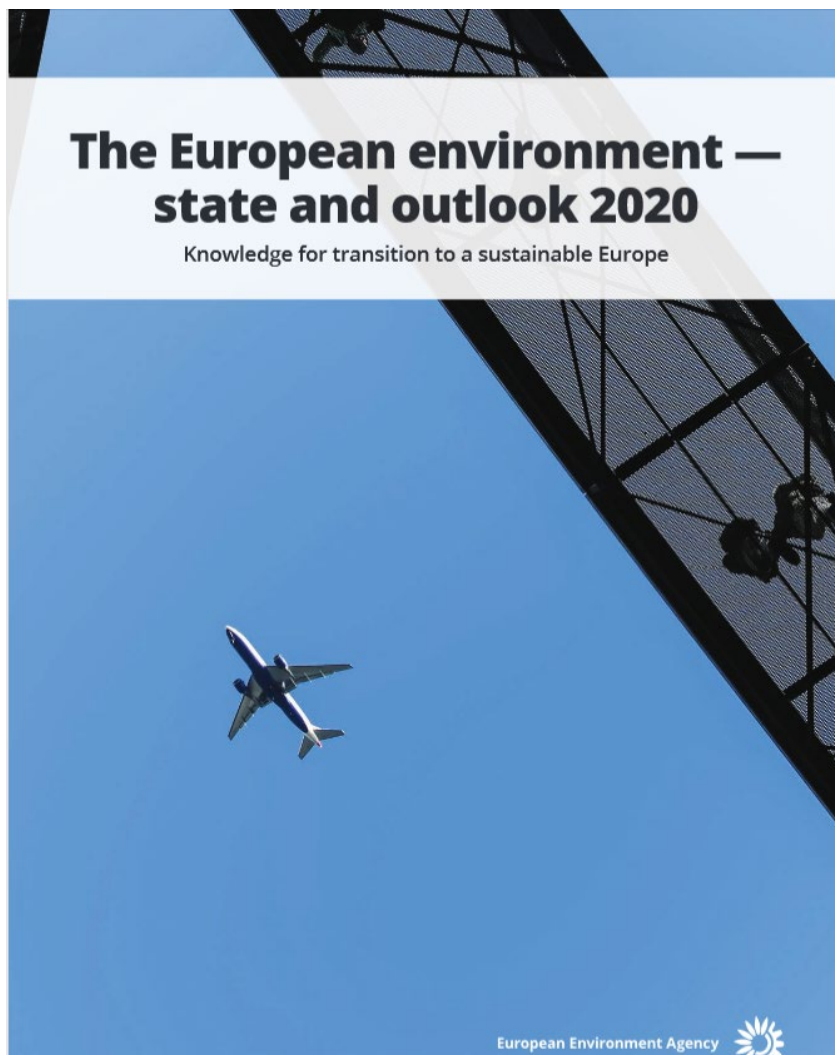


Table ES.1 Summary of past trends, outlooks and prospects of meeting policy objectives/targets

Theme	Past trends and outlook		Prospects of meeting policy objectives/targets		
	Past trends (10-15 years)	Outlook to 2030	2020	2030	2050
Protecting, conserving and enhancing natural capital					
Terrestrial protected areas	Improving	Improving	✓		
Marine protected areas	Improving	Improving	✓		
EU protected species and habitats	Mixed	Mixed	✗		
Common species (birds and butterflies)	Mixed	Mixed	✗		
Ecosystem condition and services	Mixed	Mixed	✗		
Water ecosystems and wetlands	Mixed	Mixed	✗		
Hydromorphological pressures	Mixed	Mixed	✗		
State of marine ecosystems and biodiversity	Mixed	Mixed	✗		
Pressures and impacts on marine ecosystems	Mixed	Mixed	✗		
Urbanisation and land use by agriculture and forestry	Mixed	Mixed	✗		✗
Soil condition	Mixed	Mixed	✗		
Air pollution and impacts on ecosystems	Mixed	Mixed	✗		
Chemical pollution and impacts on ecosystems	Mixed	Mixed	✗		
Climate change and impacts on ecosystems	Mixed	Mixed	✗		
Resource-efficient, circular and low-carbon economy					
Material resource efficiency	Improving	Improving	✓		
Circular use of materials	Mixed	Mixed			
Waste generation	Mixed	Mixed	✗		
Waste management	Improving	Improving	✓		
Greenhouse gas emissions and mitigation efforts	Improving	Improving	✓	✗	✗
Energy efficiency	Improving	Improving	✓	✗	✗
Renewable energy sources	Improving	Improving	✓	✗	✗
Emissions of air pollutants	Improving	Improving	✓		
Pollutant emissions from industry	Improving	Improving	✓		
Clean industrial technologies and processes	Improving	Improving	✓		
Emissions of chemicals	Improving	Improving	✓		
Water abstraction and its pressures on surface and groundwater	Improving	Improving	✓		
Sustainable use of the seas	Improving	Improving	✓		
Safeguarding from environmental risks to health and well-being					
Concentrations of air pollutants	Improving	Improving	✗	✓	
Air pollution impacts on human health and well-being	Improving	Improving	✗	✓	
Population exposure to environmental noise and impacts on human health	Improving	Improving	✗		
Preservation of quiet areas	Improving	Improving	✗		
Pollution pressures on water and links to human health	Improving	Improving	✗		
Chemical pollution and risks to human health and well-being	Improving	Improving	✗		
Climate change risks to society	Improving	Improving	✗		
Climate change adaptation strategies and plans	Improving	Improving	✗		
Indicative assessment of past trends (10-15 years) and outlook to 2030			Indicative assessment of prospects of meeting selected policy objectives/targets		
Improving trends/developments dominate	Year	✓	Largely on track		
Trends/developments show a mixed picture	Year	✗	Partially on track		
Deteriorating trends/developments dominate	Year	✗	Largely not on track		

Why do we need to act?

60-70%

of soils are not healthy

13%

of EU soils suffer from high erosion with 1.25 bEUR yearly losses in crop yield

78%

of land take takes place in agricultural land

7.4 million tonnes

of CO₂ lost yearly by mineral soils under cropland

25%

of land in Southern, central and Eastern Europe at high or very high risk of desertification

200 – 800 k deaths globally per year due to soil contamination

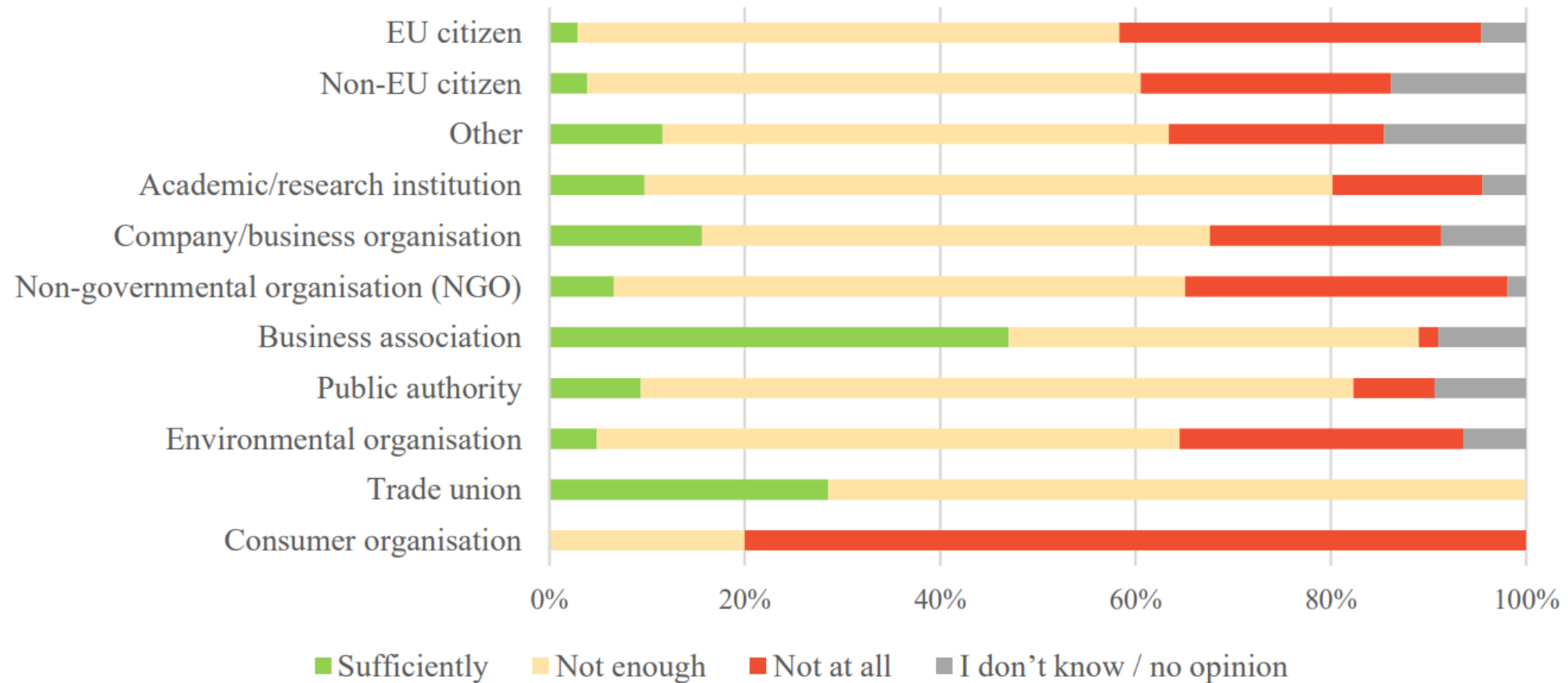
390.000 contaminated sites to be remediated

Erosion, compaction, organic matter decline, pollution, loss of soil biodiversity, acidification, salinization, excess nutrients, desertification, land take and sealing



Soil degradation not sufficiently addressed in EU

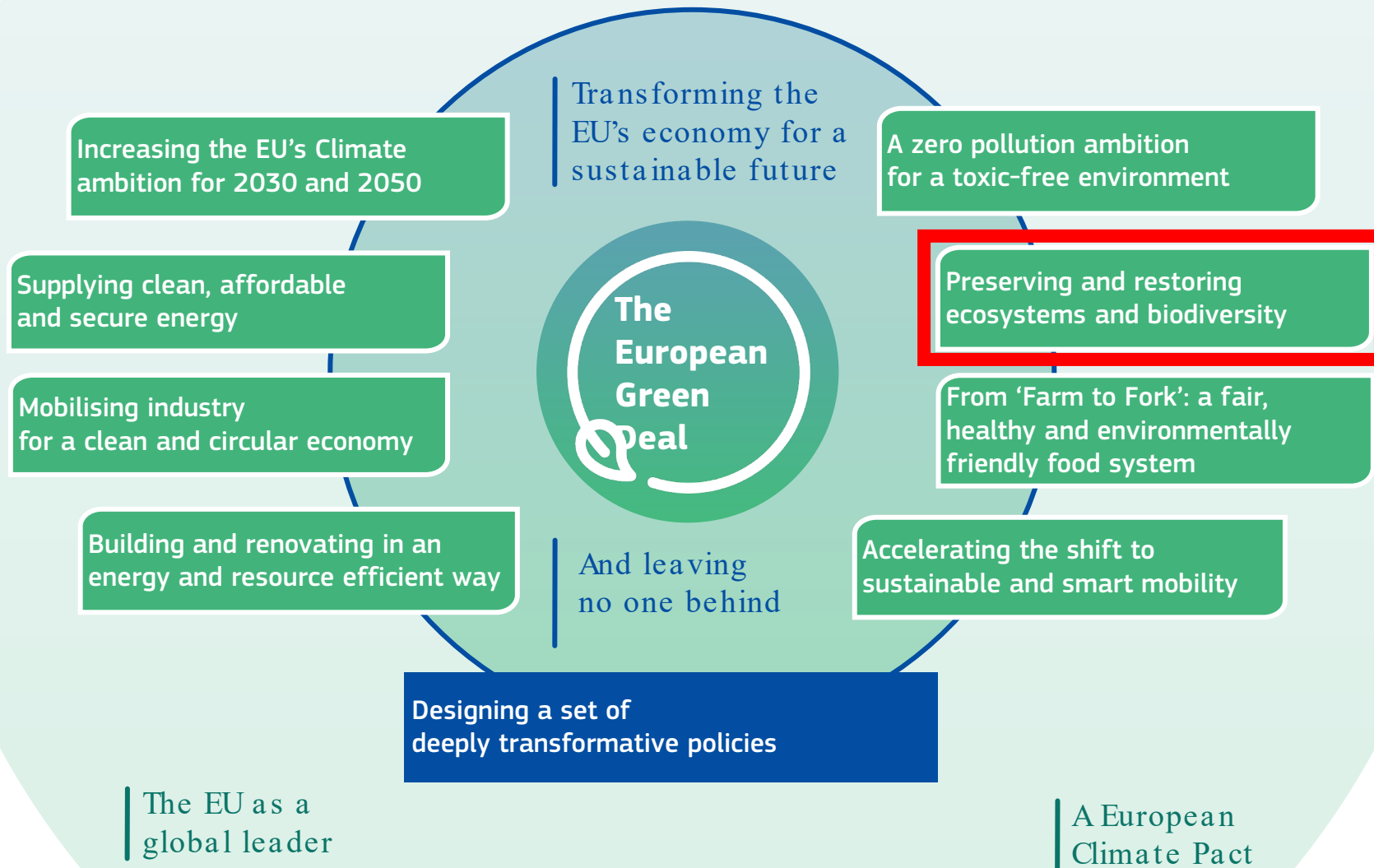
‘In your opinion, are the causes of soil and land degradation sufficiently addressed at EU level’
(n=5 782)²



Global action



European Green Deal (°11/12/2019)



EU Biodiversity Strategy
(°20/05/2020)



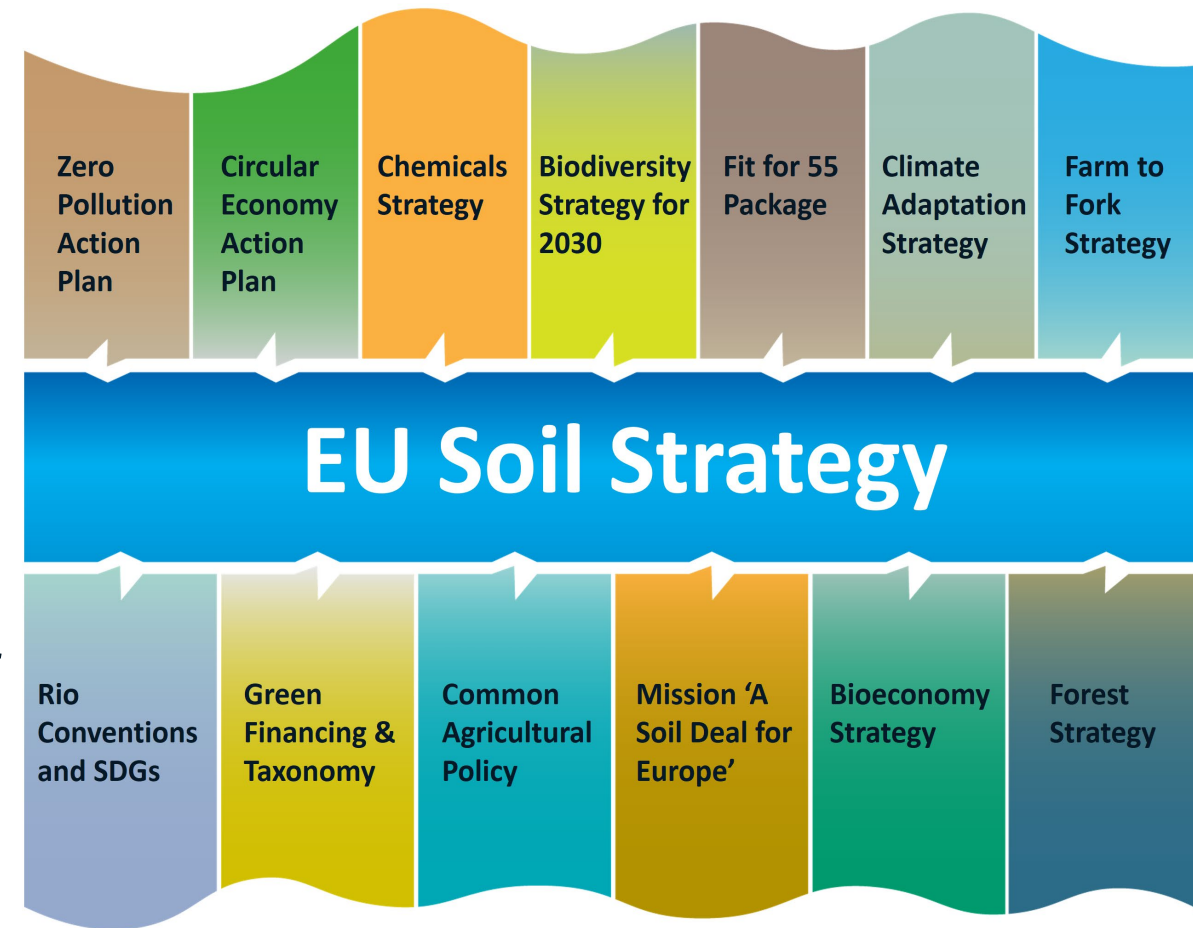
EU Soil Strategy
(°17/11/2021)



Proposal Soil Monitoring Law
(°05/07/2023)

Policy context and links

- Continuing and aggravating soil degradation with transboundary impact
 - Common solutions necessary
- Soil as solution for climate and biodiversity crisis
 - Momentum
- Increasing cost of no action: benefits of soil restoration outweigh costs
 - Sense of urgency





The vision for soil

- By **2050**, all EU soil ecosystems are in **healthy** condition and are thus more **resilient**, which will require very **decisive changes** in this decade.
- By then, **protection, sustainable use and restoration of soil** has become the norm.
- Healthy soils contribute as key **solution to our big challenges** to achieve climate neutrality, a clean and circular economy, revert biodiversity loss, safeguard human health, halt desertification and revert land degradation.

| Existing objectives reconfirmed

For 2030

- SDG 15.3: combat desertification, restore degradation, achieve land degradation-neutrality
- Restoration of degraded and carbon-rich ecosystems
- LULUCF greenhouse gas net removal of 310 million tonnes CO₂eq
- By 2027, good status in surface waters and groundwater
- Reduction of nutrient losses by $\geq 50\%$, of use and risk of chemical pesticides and use of more hazardous pesticides by 50%
- Progress in remediation of contaminated sites

For 2050

- No net land take
- No risk from soil pollution for human health and environment
- Climate-neutral Europe, with land-based climate neutrality by 2035
- Climate-resilient society adapted to climate change






European Parliament resolution on soil protection



ENVI Committee Press  @EP_Environment · Apr 28

...

#EPPlenary adopts @EP_Environment resolution with 605  55  41 
calling on the @EU_Commission to design an EU-wide common legal framework for the protection & sustainable use of soil

Press release 



MEPs call for EU common legal framework for the ...
Parliament calls on the Commission to design an EU-wide common legal framework for the protection ...
europarl.europa.eu

| EU Soil Strategy for 2030

“The Commission will table a dedicated legislative proposal on soil health by 2023 which will enable the objectives of this strategy to be met and good soil health to be achieved across the EU by 2050. Such a legislative initiative will fulfil better regulation requirements, be based on a thorough impact assessment, including a subsidiarity check, and fully respect the competences of Member States in this matter.”





Proposes legislation



European Parliament



Council of the
European Union



Adopt legislation by co-decision



SUSTAINABLE USE OF NATURAL RESOURCES



European Commission
Commission européenne



Commission européenne
European Commission

“

“ Today, we are filling a major legal gap to bring soil under our legal acquis. This will become the first EU law on soil. Our ultimate objective is to achieve healthy soils by 2050. “

A close-up photograph of dry, cracked earth, showing a network of dark, irregular fissures in a light brown, parched soil. The cracks vary in width and depth, creating a complex, polygonal pattern across the entire frame.

Scope of the proposal

- Directive allows flexible and proportionate intervention
- All soils in the territory of Member States
- Staged approach

Soil Monitoring Law

Directive on soil monitoring and resilience

01

Objectives

Healthy soils
by 2050



03

Monitoring & assessment

Descriptors, measurements,
methodologies



05

Sustainable soil management

Principles and land
take mitigation



07

Reporting

Informing the public
and evaluation



02

Definitions

Including criteria for
healthy soil



04

Services & support

Certification and data support



06

Contaminated sites

Identification, investigation, risk
assessment, management,
registration



European
Commission



Objectives

- Solid and coherent soil monitoring framework
- Healthy soils by 2050
- Providing ecosystem services
- Environment, social and economic needs
- Climate change, biodiversity, resilience against natural disasters, food security, human health



Definitions

- Healthy soils: several soil descriptors with or without criteria
- One out all out principle
- Specific terminology defined in article 3 and throughout the legal text



Monitoring & assessment

- Soil districts & competent authorities
- Soil health descriptors and criteria
- Methodologies for sample survey and analysis of descriptors
- Regular monitoring and assessment



Sustainable soil management

- Basic principles for:
 - Sustainable soil management practices
 - Regeneration practices
- Synergies with other EU plans and programmes
- Public participation
- Advice, training, capacity building, awareness
- Land take mitigation principles



Contaminated sites

- Risk-based approach
- Identification and investigation of potentially contaminated sites
- Risk assessment of contaminated sites
- Risk reduction measures for sites with unacceptable risks
- Public register and public involvement



Reporting & final provisions

- Regular electronic reporting
- Transparency
- Evaluation and review
- Committee
- Access to justice and penalties
- Transposition



Proposes legislation



European Parliament



Council of the
European Union



Adopt legislation by co-decision

Thank you! Questions?

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