



EU Soil Strategy for 2030



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Reaping the benefits of healthy soils for people, food, nature and climate





EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2030

Commitments for soil:

- It is essential to step up efforts to **protect soil fertility, reduce soil erosion and increase soil organic matter.**
- This should be done by **adopting sustainable soil management practices,** including as part of the CAP.
- Significant progress is also needed on **identifying contaminated soil sites, restoring degraded soils, defining the conditions for their good ecological status, introducing restoration objectives, and improving the monitoring of soil quality.**
- To address these issues in a comprehensive way and help to fulfil EU and international commitments on land-degradation neutrality, the Commission will update the **EU Soil Thematic Strategy** in 2021.

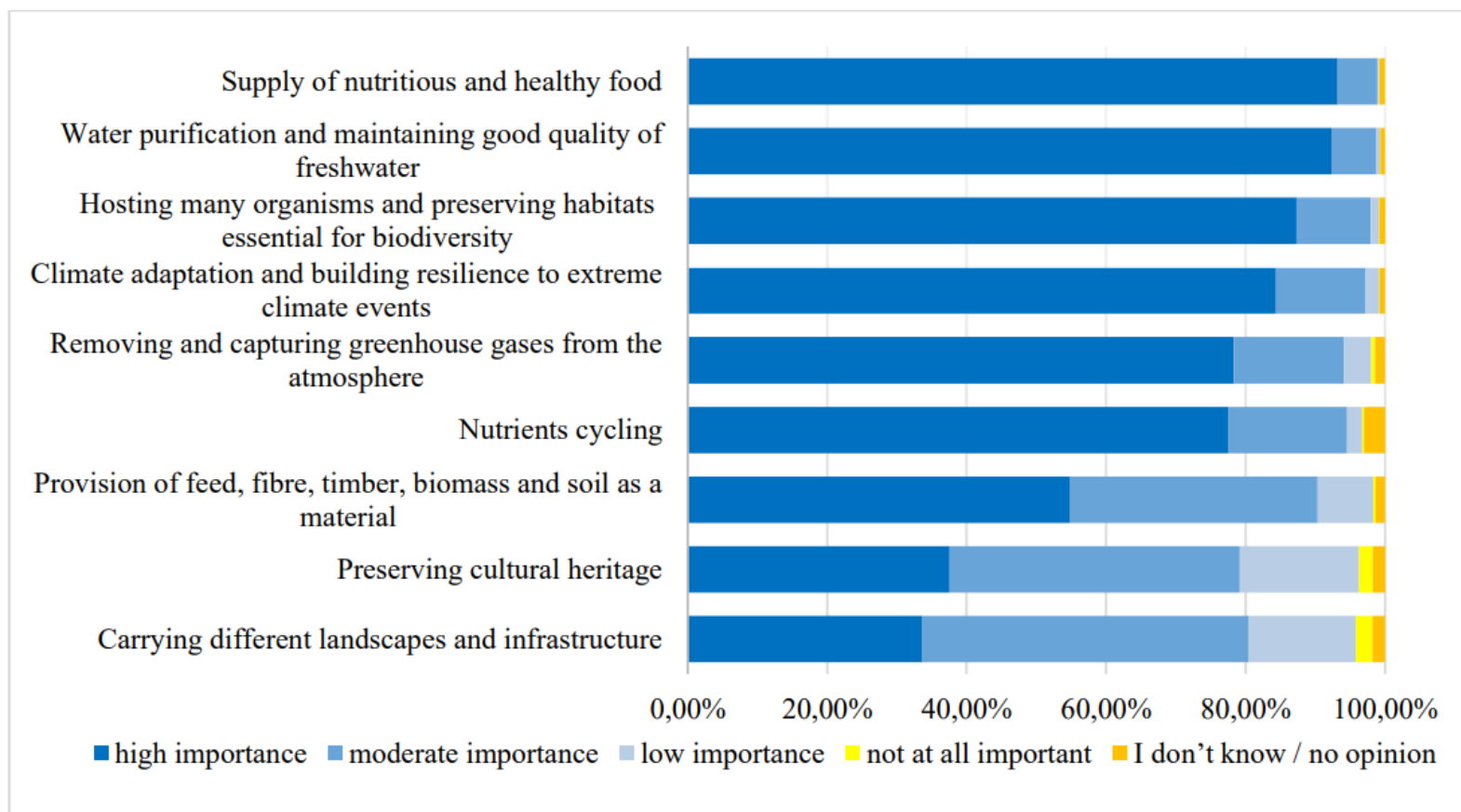


New EU Soil Strategy: the process

- **Soil Expert Group:** regular discussions on soil policy since 2015
- **MS' input on "Most urgent actions for Soil Policy":** 10th Soil Expert Group meeting, 23/09/2020
- Various **stakeholder conferences** in the past few years
- **Roadmap** consultation: 4 weeks, closed on 10 December 2020, with 228 replies (including MS)
- **Open Public Consultation:** 12 weeks, closed on 27 April 2021 with 1673 replies (including MS)
- **Results of the public consultation:** https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12634-Healthy-soils-new-EU-soil-strategy_en
- **Adoption** on 17 November 2021

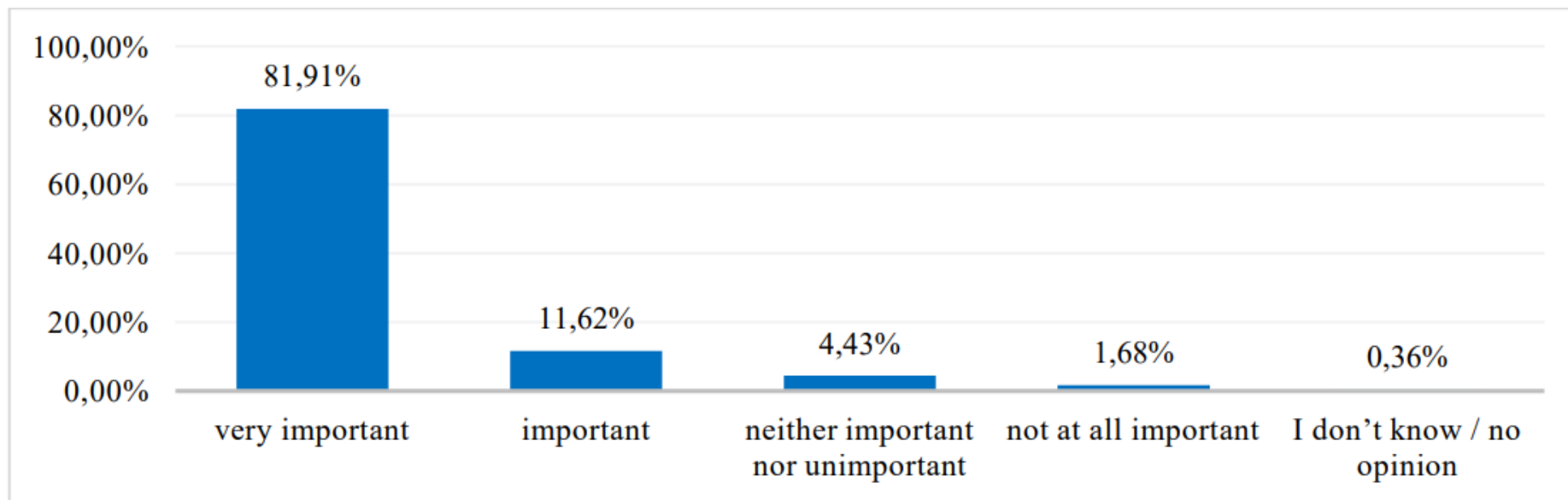
Open public consultation

Which soil ecosystem services do you consider as the most important?



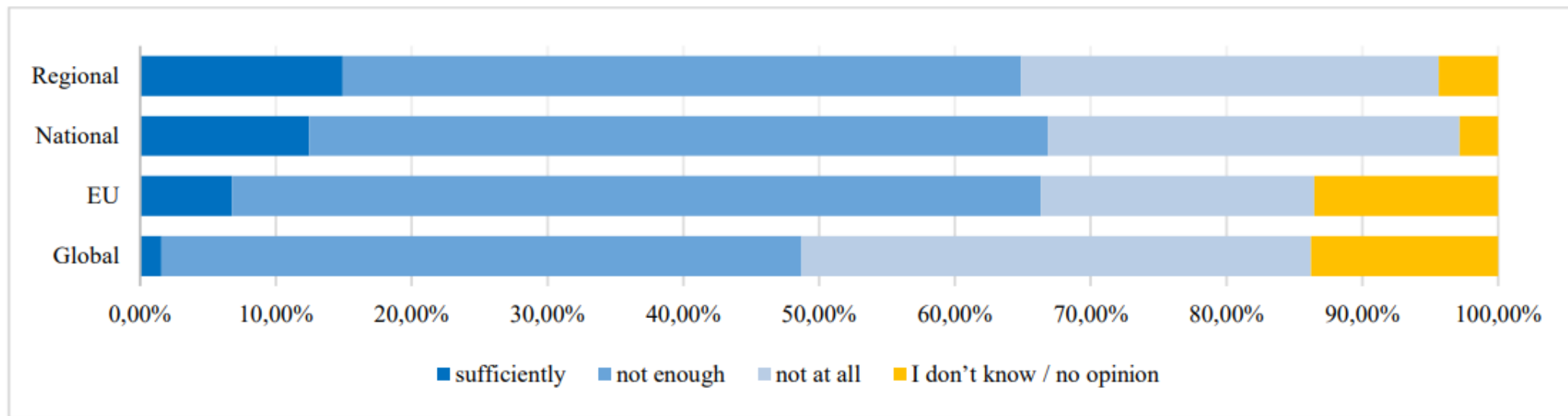
| Open public consultation

How would you rank the importance of protecting soil health/quality and its restoration at EU level?

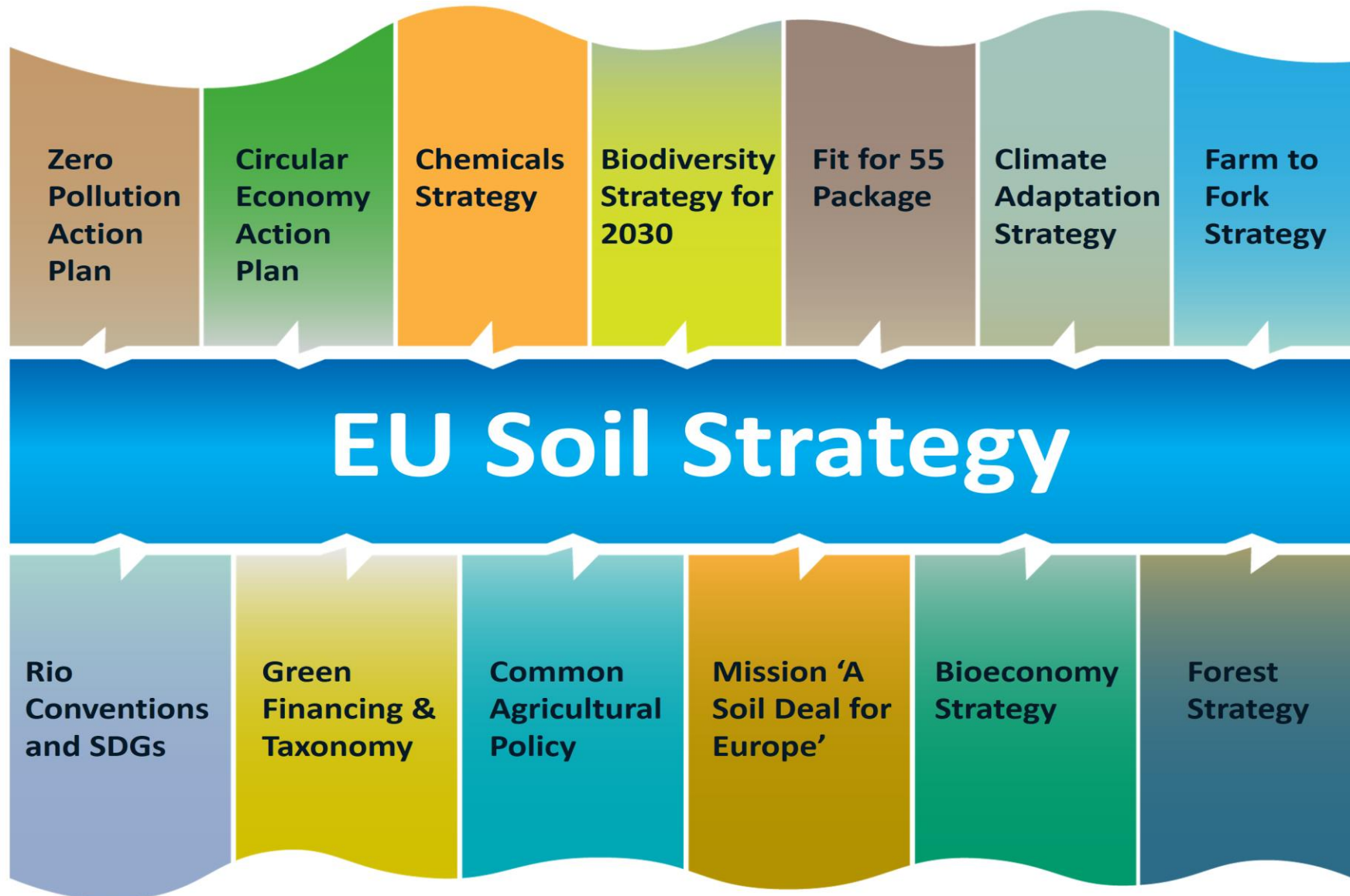


| Open public consultation

To the best of your knowledge, are the causes of soil and land degradation sufficiently addressed?



Links with other policies



New EU Soil Strategy: the package

The new EU Soil Strategy is a package:

- **Communication** that provides a framework for the protection, restoration and sustainable use of soils with a long-term vision, a set of existing objectives and actions to achieve them. The Strategy answers to the request of the Parliament to propose a legal framework for soil.
- **Staff Working Document** containing the essence of the knowledge base supporting the Strategy and the summary of the stakeholder consultation

Policy context



Soil degradation continues in the EU and so do its transboundary impacts => common solutions necessary



Soil recognized as a necessary solution for the climate and biodiversity crisis => factual and political momentum



Soil degradation in the EU costs more than 50 billion EUR per year. Costs of no action amount globally to EUR 5.4 and 8.6 trillion/year. Benefits of soil restoration outweigh costs 6 times => urgency



Challenges: What do we need tackle?

70%
of soils are NOT
healthy

13%
EU soils suffer
from high
erosion with
1.25 BEUR
yearly losses
on crop yield

78%
of land take
takes place in
agricultural land

**200.000 -
800.000
deaths**
globally per year due
to soil contamination

**7.4 million
tonnes of
CO₂**
Lost yearly by
mineral soils
under cropland

390.000
Contaminated
sites to be
remediated

25%
of land in
Southern, central and
Eastern Europe at
high or very high
risk of
desertification

Soil “diseases”:

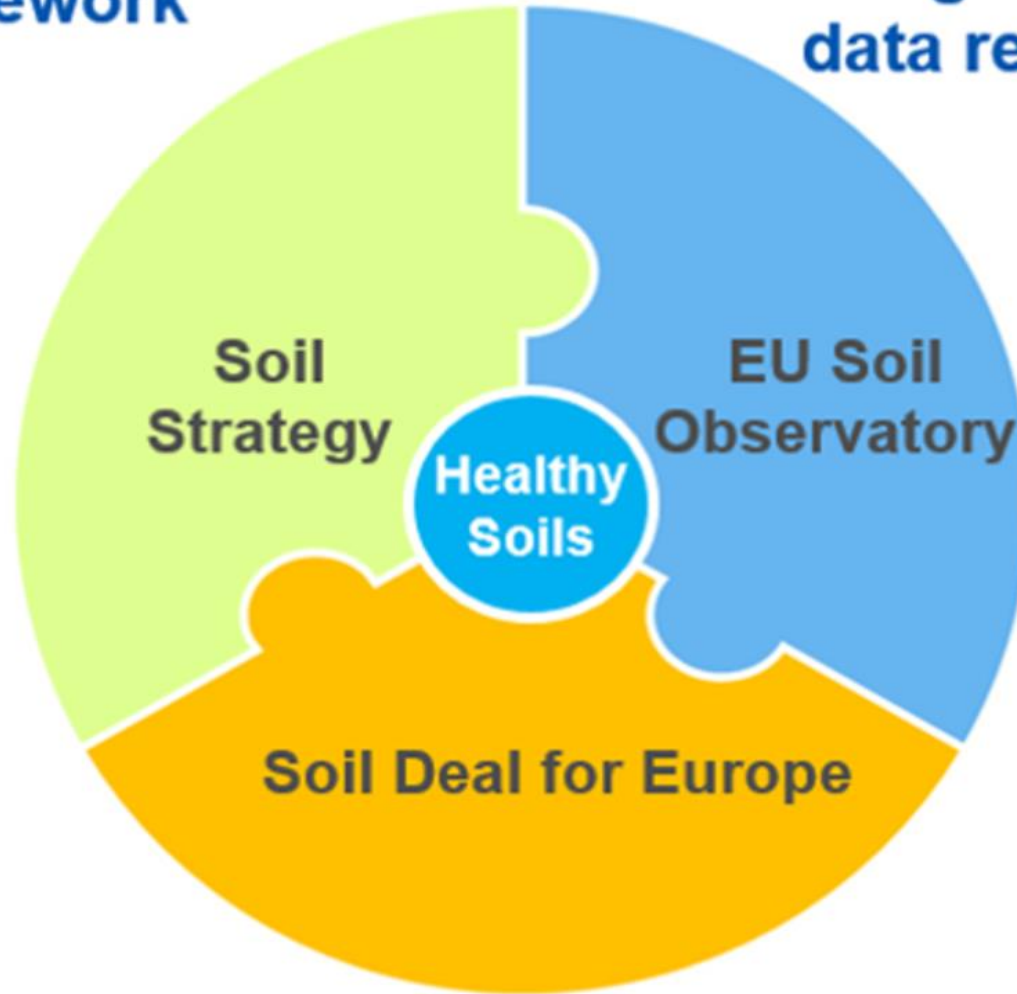
Erosion, compaction, organic matter decline, pollution, loss of soil biodiversity, salinization, desertification, land take and sealing



EU soil package

Policy framework

**Long-term
data reservoir**



Funding mechanism



Existing objectives (medium term)

- By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil , including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a **land degradation-neutral world** (Sustainable Development Goal 15.3).
- By 2030, significant areas of degraded and **carbon-rich ecosystems** are restored.
- By 2030, achieve an **EU greenhouse gas net removal** of 310 million tonnes CO2 equivalent for the land use, land use change and forestry (**LULUCF**) sector.
- By 2027, reach good ecological status and good chemical status in **surface waters** and good chemical status and good quantitative status in **groundwater**.
- By 2030, reduce **nutrient losses** by at least 50%, the overall **use and risk of chemical pesticides** by 50% and the **use of more hazardous pesticides** by 50%.
- By 2030, significant progress has been made in the **remediation of contaminated sites**.

Existing objectives (long term)

- By 2050, reach **no net land take**.
- By 2050, **soil pollution** should be reduced to levels no longer considered harmful to human health and natural ecosystems and respect the boundaries our planet can cope with, thus creating a toxic-free environment.
- By 2050, achieving a **climate-neutral Europe**, and as the first step by 2035 to achieve land-based climate neutrality in the EU.
- by 2050, achieve for EU a climate-resilient society, fully adapted to the unavoidable impacts of climate change

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.



Objectives: What do we want to achieve?

Objective: Allowing soil to deliver its essential services (food, energy, raw materials, carbon sequestration, water purification, nutrient regulation, pest control, basis for medicines , recreation etc.)

Soil as a **key enabler** to achieve Green Deal objectives:

- Climate change mitigation and adaptation
- More resource efficient and circular economy
- More biodiversity for human, animal and plant health
- Ensuring healthy water resources

Solutions: What does the Soil Strategy commit to?



A basket of measures/ actions:

- Combination of voluntary and legally binding measures
- At local, regional, national, EU and global level



The concept of healthy soils: to be developed with MS and stakeholders



Soil Monitoring



Sustainable Soil Management



Restoration of degraded soils

| Key actions

- **Soil health for climate change mitigation and adaptation**



- Assess **the state of peatlands** in the Global Peatlands initiative
- Join the **global 4 per 1000 initiative**
- Present **carbon farming initiative** (2021) and **proposal on carbon removal certification** (2022)

- **Soil health and the circular economy**



- Benchmark streams of excavated soils in the EU (2023)
- Promote the **land take hierarchy and ask MS to set targets** for 2030
- Provide **guidance** and exchange of practices to reduce sealing (2024)
- Close the nutrient and carbon circle by **safely recycling biowaste**

- **Soil biodiversity for human, animal and plant health**

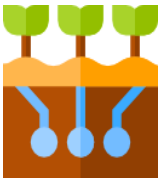


- Assess soil biodiversity, **antimicrobial resistance** (2022) and **invasive alien species**
- Put soil biodiversity on the international agenda (e.g. **CBD COP 15**, GSP)



| Key actions

- **Healthy soils for clean water**



- Improve **soil-sediment-water nexus**
- Guidance on sustainable management of sediment
- Better integrate soil and land use management in the River Basin Management Plans

- **Making Sustainable Soil Management (SSM) the new normal**



- **Set of SSM practices** and criteria to phase out unsustainable practices
- Launch together with MS the **Test Your Soil For Free initiative**
- Promote **sustainable soil management through the CAP** and build a network of practitioners

- **Prevent desertification**



- Develop a **common methodology to assess desertification and land degradation** and report regularly
- Propose to **declare the EU as affected party under the UNCCD**
- Continue to support development projects **outside the EU**



| Key actions

- **Prevent pollution**

- Improve the **risk assessment of chemicals on soil quality** and of soil contaminants on human health and the environment
- **Restrict microplastics** (2022), **PFAS** and other soil contaminants under the REACH Regulation, and develop a policy framework on bio-based, biodegradable and compostable plastics (2022)
- Revise the SUP Directive, evaluate the Sewage Sludge Directive (2022) and review the Fertilising Products Regulation (2026)



- **Restore degraded soil and remediate contaminated sites**

- Facilitate an **exchange between MS on risk assessment methodologies**
- Develop an **EU priority list for soil contaminants** (2024)
- **Revise** the Industrial Emissions Directive (2022) and evaluate the Environmental Liability Directive (2023)



| Key actions

- **Improve digital knowledge, monitoring and research on soil**



- Implement the **EU Soil Observatory**, the **Land Information System for Europe** and the **Soil Mission**

- **Enable the transition to healthy soil**

- With **private finance and EU funding**



- Publish a guide with an overview of EU **funding opportunities** for healthy soils (2022)
- Foster investments towards sustainable soil management through the EU Taxonomy Regulation

- **Through soil literacy and societal engagement**



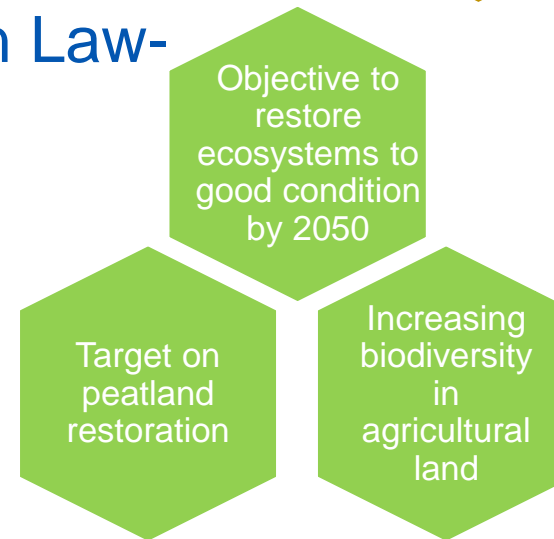
- Launch a **soil literacy initiative**
- Exchange and **share best practices** in communication and engagement on soil
- Use the European common reference framework of sustainability competences



Soil Health Law



Nature Restoration Law-link to soil



What's in it for whom?

What is in it for land users (eg farmers, foresters)?

- Better knowledge of soil quality
- Long-term viability and food security
- More funding and test for free initiative
- Carbon farming and innovative business models

What is in it for citizens?

- A more sustainable future with healthy soils
- Better informed choices and literacy
- Greener urban and rural environment
- Tackling of climate change and biodiversity loss

Soil Strategy

What is in it for industry and economic operators?

- Level playing field
- Legal certainty on liabilities for soil contamination
- Green and clean innovation potential
- Sustainable supply of raw materials

What is in it for public authorities?

- Clear legal framework and targets across the EU
- Reduced cost and impact of inaction
- More environmental awareness and citizen support
- Improved governance



Thank you for your attention



More info available on https://ec.europa.eu/environment/soil/index_en.htm