

To: Coreper I, Deputy Permanent Representatives

CC: Environment and Agriculture attachés, Mertens coordinators

Dear Ambassadors,

In the run up to your exchange on the provisional agreement on the Soil Monitoring Law (SML) during the upcoming Coreper meeting on 21 May, we urge you to take a strong and decisive position in support of the law. The Council needs to act as a responsible co-legislator and help seal the deal as a matter of urgency.

While the provisional agreement on the Soil Monitoring Law falls disappointingly short in several critical areas – most notably by including excessive flexibilities as well as lacking legally binding targets and concrete measures for sustainable soil management – it nonetheless marks a critical milestone. As the EU's first ever law protecting our soils, the Soil Monitoring Law represents a vital starting point for putting European soils on the path to recovery. With the European Parliament voting on the agreement in the coming weeks, a positive signal from the Council now will be key for its successful adoption – something EU citizens, civil society, scientists and progressive business and farmers have asked for (see letter signed by [more than 250 signees](#)).

For this reason, we wish to emphasise the urgency of sealing the deal, notably because...

- **...Science is clear:** EU soils are [deteriorating](#) at an alarming rate, endangering essential ecosystem services and hindering the achievement of critical EU and international commitments, such as reaching climate neutrality, halting and reversing biodiversity loss, and achieving zero pollution. In addition, healthy soils are critical to the [long-term resilience and stability of farmers' livelihoods](#), especially as extreme weather events become ever [more frequent](#).
- **...European legislation to protect and restore soils is long overdue.** Soil ecosystems have long been neglected in EU policy, which has resulted in very partial protection and highly fragmented governance on soils in the EU. The lack of dedicated EU legislation on soils has been [singled out by many](#) as a major cause for the alarming state of our soils today. As an integral component of global water, carbon and nutrient cycles, and pathway for pollutants towards water bodies, soil inherently represents a cross-border issue. The European Commission's [impact assessment](#) has thoroughly examined the issue of soil health and clearly concluded that EU action is both necessary and provides added value.
- **....The provisional agreement on the Soil Monitoring Law is a timid but vital step towards addressing the crisis of soil degradation.** Policymaking is currently forced to rely on incomplete data which reveals only a fraction of the dire situation. A better understanding of the state of soils in Europe will allow for the problem to be tackled in the most efficient manner possible. Without decisive, coordinated and fast action, soil degradation will only worsen.

- **...There is clear stakeholder support for this law:** Adopting a Soil Monitoring Law also means answering the calls of a broad spectrum of stakeholders in support of stronger EU policies on soil, including the [private sector, farmers, scientists and civil society](#), the business coalition [OP2B](#), [water service providers](#) and the [biogas industry](#).

Bringing Europe's soils back to health is not optional – it is a prerequisite for overall ecosystem integrity, societal well-being, and a sustainable and resilient economy. For these reasons, we urge you to seal the deal on the Soil Monitoring Law at the upcoming Coreper meeting and take a crucial step toward making this first-ever EU law on soils a reality.

We remain at your disposal should you require further details or discussion on any of the points above.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sergiy Moroz". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style. Below the signature is a thin horizontal line.

Sergiy Moroz, Policy Manager for Biodiversity and Water, European Environmental Bureau (EEB)