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On the urgent need to adopt the EU Soil Monitoring Law



As we approach the final crucial step in the adoption of the Soil Monitoring Law, the European Parliament's votes on the deal, 51 civil society organisations highlight the urgent need to adopt this law to finally enable EU Member States to address the crisis of soil degradation in Europe. With the Council's approval of the deal on 29 September, we call on the European Parliament to act as a responsible co-legislator, and seal the deal.

Healthy soils are essential for life, providing the foundation for [95%](#) of the food we eat. They filter and store water, help plants grow and are critical to the long-term resilience and stability of farmers' livelihoods, especially in the face of [increasing extreme weather events](#). Yet, [60 to 70%](#) of European soils are in bad condition, and the lack of a dedicated EU legislative framework is one of the major contributors to this. **Europe's soils are in crisis, and this must change.**

The Soil Monitoring Law is an important step to address this issue, for the reasons outlined below:

- 1. Science is clear:** EU soils are [deteriorating](#) at an alarming rate, endangering key ecosystem functions. The [2025 report](#) on the State of Europe's environment highlights that, rather than showing clear signs of improvement, the outlook for the coming decade remains mixed, and the EU is largely not on track to meet policy targets for 2030. Soils across Europe are [drying out](#), not only in Southern European countries like Spain and Italy, but also in Hungary and Bulgaria. Soil erosion leads to the loss of soil equivalent to more than 300,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools per year ([1 billion tonnes](#)). Europe's soils are heavily affected by pollution, such as [pesticides](#), and most of our farmland faces a [nutrient imbalance](#), which is harmful to human health, crops, ecosystems, and the climate. This is only a snapshot of the dire situation of soils in Europe. Many of these processes, especially when they concern soil life, are invisible to us and not well monitored, yet they threaten our collective health and well-being, farmers' livelihoods and the resilience of our ecosystems.
- 2. European legislation to protect and restore soils is long overdue:** 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. Soil inherently represents a cross-border issue, as an integral component of global water, carbon and nutrient cycles, and a pathway for pollutants towards water bodies. The European Commission's [impact assessment](#) has clearly concluded that EU action is both necessary and provides added value. The Soil Monitoring Law is a timid but vital step in addressing this crisis. NGOs have been calling [for a much stronger law](#) with legally-binding targets, clear measures on sustainable soil management and land take, and mandatory national soil health plans, but none of these elements were included. Yet, despite its [glaring lack of ambition](#), the Soil Monitoring Law remains crucial, as 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. Since some soils respond very slowly to restorative actions, with visible effects appearing only with a delay, strengthening the knowledge base now is imperative. Without decisive, coordinated and fast action, soil degradation will only worsen.

- 3. Political signals are positive and must be consistent:** The text put to a vote is the result of months of negotiation and carefully crafted compromise between co-legislators. It has already received clear support from the Parliament's Environment Committee in June, and the deal was approved by a large majority in the Council on 29 September¹. We now call upon the European Parliament to act as a responsible co-legislator and seal the deal that all political groups helped reach.
- 4. 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](#), the [biowaste recycling industry](#) and the [biogas industry](#). In the call for evidence in 2022, [79%](#) of replies supported an EU Soil Law. Contrary to disinformation, the Soil Monitoring Law puts no obligations on farmers and therefore also no bureaucracy and management requirements or costs.
- 5. The cost of inaction outweighs by far the cost of action:** Soil degradation in Europe costs at least [97 billion euros](#) per year, with the costs of inaction outweighing the cost of action by a [factor of six](#). The real question is therefore not whether we can afford a modest Soil Monitoring Law, but whether we can afford continued destruction of our soils, especially as the costs of soil degradation are primarily borne by [farmers and society at large](#).

For the reasons outlined above, we call on the Members of the European Parliament to honour the agreement it has helped to secure on the first ever EU law on soils and pave the way towards a better understanding of the state of Europe's soils and action to reverse soil degradation.

More information: [Questions & Answers on the Soil Monitoring Law](#).

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¹ During the vote on the Council, only Germany rejected, and Austria abstained. All remaining Member States voted in favour of the Directive.

Signatory organisations:

European Environmental Bureau
Pesticide Action Network Europe
France Nature Environnement
Environmental Coalition on Standards
Swedish Society for Nature Conservation
Legambiente
European Land and Soil Alliance
Institute for Soil Conservation & Sustainable
Agriculture, gesunde-erde.net
Naturschutzbund Deutschland
ECO-TIRAS International Association of
River Keepers
CEEweb for Biodiversity
Friends of the Earth Europe
ZERO - Associação Sistema Terrestre
Sustentável
European Bioeconomy Bureau
Hellenic Institute of Speleological Research
Institute of Circular Economy
WWF EPO
Ecologistas en Acción
Basque Speleologists' Union
CAN Europe
German Speleological Federation
European Compost Network
Environmental Pillar
ClientEarth
Latvian Fund for Nature
CIPRA International
Fondation pour la Nature et l'Homme

Natuurmonumenten
Green Impact
Romanian Speleological Federation
Suomen luonnonsuojeluliitto
Carbon Market Watch
Liga para a Protecção da Natureza
BirdLife Europe and Central Asia
Fédération Spéléologique Européenne
European Cave Protection Commission
Romanian Ornithological Society
Natuurpunt vzw
natur&mwelt a.s.b.l.
Czech Society for Ornithology
Mouvement Ecologique
Umweltdachverband
Fondation Partage Luxembourg
Danish Society for Nature Conservation
Lipu BirdLife Italia
Deutscher Naturschutzring
Meng Landwirtschaft
Ömweltberodung Lëtzebuerg asbl
Jeugdbond voor Natuur en Milieu vzw
Campagne "Ouni Pestiziden"
Italian Speleological Society Cave Animal
Campaign Coordinator