EU Soil Strategy for 2030:

towards healthy soils for people and the planet

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#EUGreenDeal

"The thin layer that lies below our feet is literally the basis for our existence. It is the foundation for 95% of the food we eat. Soil is a living ecosystem that is key for life on the planet and that holds our future. It is high time it gets the legal protection it deserves."

Frans **Timmermans**, Executive Vice-President for the European Green Deal

"Our ambition to make all soils healthy by 2050 is essential to fight climate change, ensure our forests are healthy, our water clean and our land rich, fertile and resilient. We are taking decisive action to protect and nurture this non-recoverable natural resource, which we cannot afford to lose."

Virginijus **Sinkevičius**, Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries

Healthy soils are essential for achieving **climate neutrality**, a clean and **circular economy,** reversing **biodiversity loss**, providing **healthy food**, safeguarding **human health,** and halting **desertification** and **land degradation**.

The new EU Soil Strategy:

Sets out a framework and concrete measures for the **protection, restoration and sustainable use of soils**, in synergy with other **European Green Deal** policies.

2050

Sets a **vision and objectives** to achieve **healthy soils by 2050 with concrete actions by 2030**.

Announces a new **Soil Health Law** by 2023 to ensure a level playing field and a high level of environmental and health protection, complementing the upcoming Nature Restoration Law.

The Soil Strategy Vision for 2050:

All EU soil ecosystems are healthy and more resilient and can therefore continue to provide their crucial services. There is no further land take and soil pollution is reduced to levels that are no longer harmful to people's health or ecosystems. Protecting soils, managing them sustainably and restoring degraded soils is a common standard.
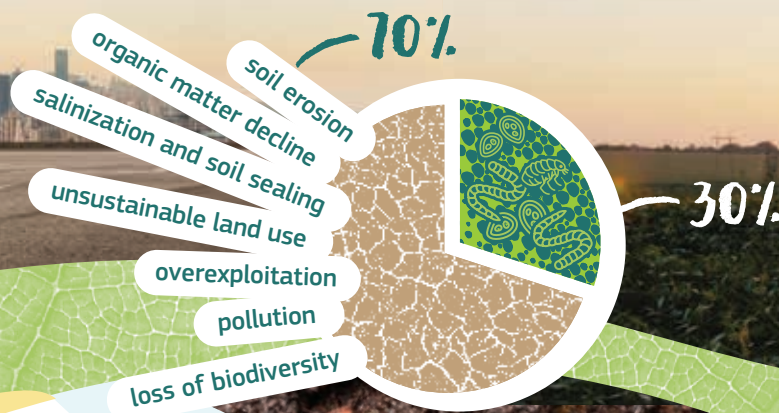
Why it's important

Soil is an essential ecosystem containing more than **25% of all living organisms on the planet.** Soil provides food, biomass and fibres, regulates water, carbon and nutrient cycles, making life possible. We have to grant it the same level of **protection as air and water**.

Healthy soils are a **key ally in the fight against climate change**: they are the largest terrestrial carbon pool in the planet. By absorbing and retaining water they reduce the risk of flooding, heat waves and drought.

Soil degradation entails **loss of ecosystem services** which are estimated at around € 38 billion per year in the EU. Erosion alone **costs European farmers** € 1.25 billion per year.

10%

organic matter decline

soil erosion

salinization and soil sealing

unsustainable land use

overexploitation

pollution

loss of biodiversity

30%

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Key actions in the Soil Strategy

🌿 **To make Sustainable Soil Management** the new normal:
  - Propose a scheme for land owners to get their soils tested for free
  - Promote sustainable soil management through the Common Agricultural Policy and share best practices

🌿 **To boost circular economy**:
  - Investigate streams of excavated soils and consider proposing a 'soil passport'
  - Integrate a 'land take hierarchy' to enhance reuse of land and less use of new land, reaching **no net land take by 2050**

🌿 **Restore degraded soils and remediate contaminated sites**

🌿 **Act to prevent desertification**

🌿 **Increase research, data and monitoring on soil**

🌿 **To mitigate and adapt to climate change**, consider proposing legally binding objectives to halt the drainage of wetlands and organic soils, and to restore managed and drained peatlands

🌿 **Mobilise the necessary societal engagement and financial resources**

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