

PRESS RELEASE

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Council adopts new rules for healthier and more resilient European soils

The Council today formally adopted the soil monitoring directive, establishing the first-ever EU-wide framework for assessing and monitoring soils, with the overarching aspirational goal of achieving **healthy soils across Europe by 2050**.

This directive is a key step towards healthier and more resilient soils, which are vital for food security, clean water and the environment.

Main elements of the directive

The new rules will help improve **soil resilience**, ensure better management of **contaminated sites** and introduce **land-take mitigation** principles, with a focus on soil sealing (the covering of soil with impermeable material such as concrete or asphalt) and soil removal (the removal of topsoil during activities such as construction).

Under the directive, member states will set up **monitoring systems** to assess the physical, chemical and biological condition of soils on their territory, based on a common EU methodology. They will regularly report to the Commission and the European Environment Agency on the state of soil health, land take and contaminated sites, ensuring that there is **comparable data across the EU** and that coordinated action can be taken to tackle soil degradation. Steps will also be taken towards **monitoring emerging contaminants such as PFAS**, pesticides and microplastics.

The directive defines common soil descriptors and introduces classes to describe soil health, linked to non-binding EU-level target values and national trigger values. These will help member states identify priorities and gradually implement measures leading to healthier soils.

The Commission will assist member states by developing common tools and methodologies and by facilitating the exchange of best practices.

Next steps

This step concludes the adoption procedure in the Council. The European Parliament is expected to hold its final vote in the coming weeks. Member states will have **three years after entry into force** to transpose the new rules into national law.

Background

Healthy soils are crucial to reaching the EU's climate neutrality goals and contribute to stopping desertification and land degradation and to preserving biodiversity and human health. However, according to available data, over 60% of European soils are in an unhealthy condition, and research shows that they are degrading further. Soil degradation is being exacerbated by unsustainable management of the land, contamination and overexploitation, along with the effects of climate change and extreme weather events.

While many pieces of EU legislation and policy instruments are relevant to soil protection, soil lacks the kind of dedicated legislative framework at EU level that other key ecosystems (water, air, marine environment) have in place. In November 2021, as part of the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030, the Commission adopted a new EU soil strategy, with the overarching goal that all soils across the EU should be in good condition by 2050. The strategy also identifies the lack of dedicated EU legislation as a major cause of soil degradation. To address this, the Commission proposed the soil monitoring law in July 2023.

- [Directive on soil monitoring and resilience](#)
- [A-item note](#)
- [Statement of the Council's reasons](#)
- [Statements by member states](#)
- [Meeting voting results](#)
- [Soil monitoring law: Council reaches deal with Parliament \(press release, 10 April 2025\)](#)

- [Why keeping soils healthy matters \(background information\)](#)
- [How nature helps fight climate change \(background information\)](#)
- [Soil strategy for 2030 \(European Commission\)](#)

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