

# EU Soil Policy Overview of recent activities

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# The Soil Thematic strategy COM(2006) 231



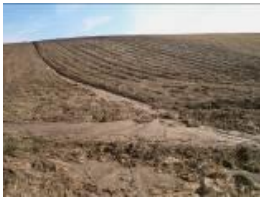
- ❖ Thematic Strategy for Soil Protection adopted in September 2006, incl. proposal for a Soil Framework Directive, COM(2006)232
- ❖ Overall objective is the protection of **soil functions** and **sustainable use** of soil, based on the following guiding principles:
  - ❖ Prevention of soil degradation
  - ❖ Restoration of degraded soils
- ❖ Sets out the **four pillars** of EU soil policy incl. 3 non-binding pillars
- ❖ To be implemented by MS
- ❖ 2012 Report from the Commission on the implementation of the STS COM(2012)46



# Soil threats considered



*Sealing*



*Organic matter decline*



*Salinisation+Acidification*



*Contamination*

*Erosion*



*Compaction*



*Landslides*



# Achievements under the Thematic strategy: awareness raising



- **Public events** [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/soil/public\\_events\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/soil/public_events_en.htm)
  - IYS 2015 many events (> 450) at EU and member states level
  - Conferences at EU level organised by the Commission: Soil Remediation and Soil Sealing, May 2011, High Level Conference 'Soil, Climate Change and Biodiversity, September 2010 etc.
  - Participation to many conferences: Global Soil Week, Green Week etc.
- **Publications by the Commission**
  - "Guidelines on best practices to limit, mitigate, compensate soil sealing" and brochure "Hard surfaces, hidden costs"
  - "Soil – the hidden part of Climate Change"
  - "Soil biodiversity: the factory of life"
  - Soil atlas of Europe, Africa, Latin America, European and Global Atlas of Soil Biodiversity (JRC)
- **Recent momentum on soils with the International Year of Soil 2015 and global agenda (SDGs, Land Degradation Neutrality UNCCD, FAO-GSP etc.) - European Commission very active on soils at global level**

# Achievements under the Thematic strategy research and monitoring



- *EU-funded research projects*
  - **RTD - FP7 & Horizon 2020 (ca 100 Mio EU contribution since 2008)**
- *LIFE/LIFE+: 147 projects on Soil Protection*  
<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/soil/pdf/LIFE%20and%20Soil%20protection.pdf>
- *Monitoring – soil data collection*
  - **A lot of soil data at national level**
  - **JRC European Soil Data Centre**
  - **LUCAS database**
    - >20,000 soil samples collected in 2009-2012 and analysed (physico-chemicals properties, Heavy Metals)
    - New campaign in 2015
  - **Land cover/land use monitoring: Corine, Copernicus**
  - > **However lack of systematic monitoring system across EU and lack of harmonisation**

# Achievements under the Thematic strategy Integration



## Soil in CAP

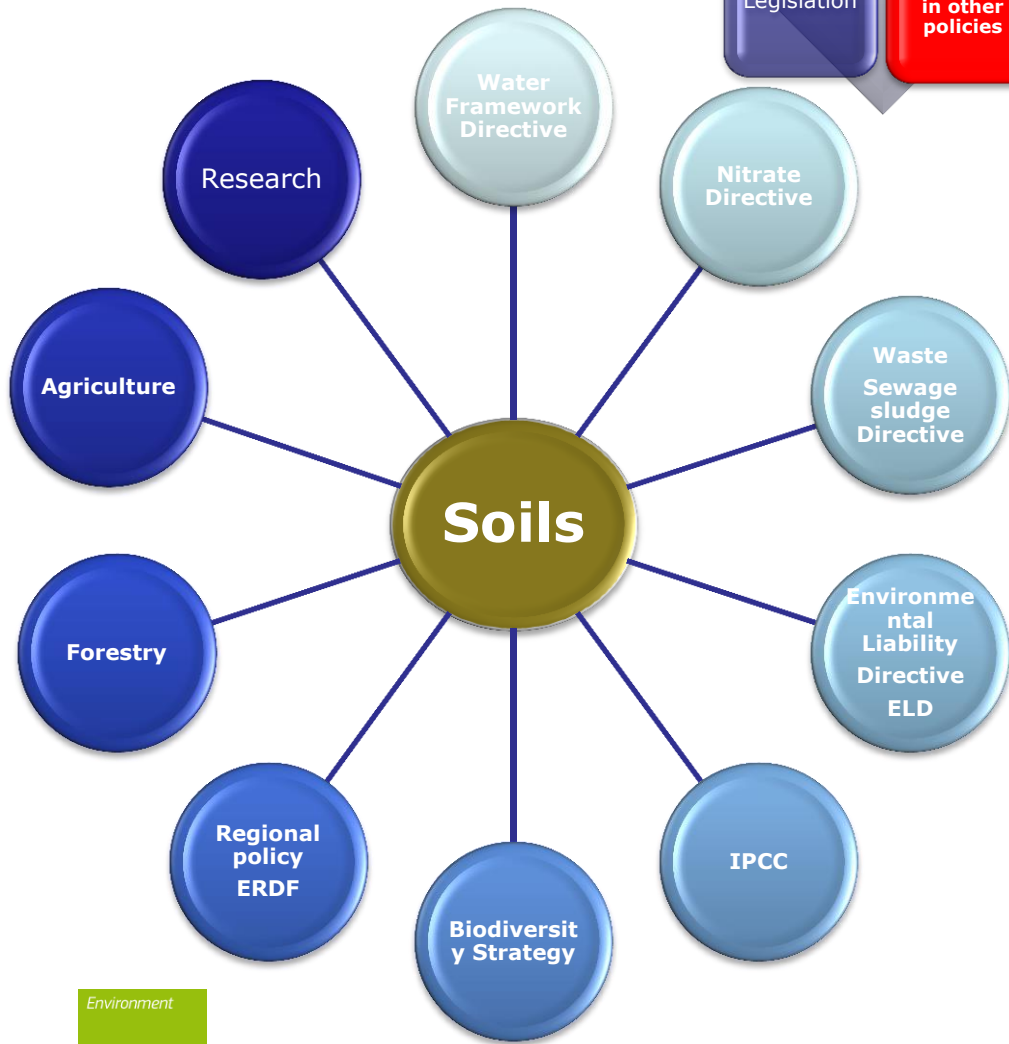
- Cross-compliance and Good Agricultural Practices
- Greening
- Rural Development

## Soil in EU environmental policies

- WFD, nitrates, waste, IED, ELD, biodiversity etc.

## Regional policy – urban sustainable development

2007-2013: EUR 3.4 billion for the rehabilitation of industrial sites and contaminated land areas



# Structure of the proposal Soil Framework Directive COM(2006) 232



## Objective: Protection of soil functions

- Integration in sectoral policies
- Precautionary measures
- Prevention of contamination
- Measures to limit or mitigate sealing

- Identification of **priority areas** for erosion, organic matter decline, compaction, salinisation, acidification, and landslides in 5 years
- Identification of **contaminated sites** in 25 years

- Programme of Measures
- National Remediation Strategy



# Soil Framework Directive proposal

- *SFD Proposal pending for almost eight years without qualified majority in Council – different issues*
  - **Subsidiarity, proposal perceived as too prescriptive (identification, remediation of soil degradation), issue of costs, political reasons...**
- *The Commission decided to withdraw the proposal in May 2014, opening the way for an alternative initiative*
  - **"The Commission remains committed to the objective of the protection of soil and will examine options on how to best achieve this. Any further initiative in this respect will however have to be considered by the next college"**
    - OJ C 163, 21.5.2014, p. 4 / OJ C 163, 28.5.2014, p. 15



# 7<sup>th</sup> Environment Action Programme



## *Objective*

- By 2020: "**land is managed sustainably** in the Union, **soil is adequately protected** and the **remediation of contaminated sites is well underway;**"
- This requires, in particular: "increasing efforts to **reduce soil erosion** and **increase soil organic matter**, to **remediate contaminated sites** and to enhance the **integration of land use aspects** into coordinated decision-making involving all relevant levels of government, supported by the **adoption of targets on soil and on land as a resource**, and land planning objectives;"

## *Commitments*

- "The Union and its Member States should also reflect as soon as possible on **how soil quality issues could be addressed using a targeted and proportionate risk-based approach within a binding legal framework.** **Targets** should also be set for **sustainable land use and soil.**"

# Key ongoing actions on EU soil policy

- *Awareness raising and knowledge base*
- *Launch of an EU Expert Group on Soil Protection*
  - **Experts nominated by EU Member States**
  - **Reflexion on how to address 7<sup>th</sup> EAP commitments on soil**
- *Inventory of soil protection measures and gap analysis*
  - **EU soil-related policies and national legislations**
  - **Inventory and gap analysis**
  - **First outcomes presented today to stakeholders (5/12/16)**
- *Mapping and Assessment of Soil-related Ecosystem Services (MAES) Soil pilot*

# State of Soils in the EU

# Main soil threats in EU

- *Soil sealing – 900-**1000 km<sup>2</sup>/yr***
- *Erosion – identified as a problem for **one quarter** of the transboundary river basins*
- *Contamination – **3M** potentially contaminated sites – **0.5 M** significant risks to human health and env.*
- *Low Soil Organic Matter for **45%** of mineral soils - SOM decline due to conversion of grassland to arable crops, deforestation, degradation of peatlands – link climate change*
- *Soil biodiversity loss due to SOM depletion, excessive nutrients and pesticides*

-> Estimated costs of soil degradation reach up to **€38bn per year** (SEC(2006)620)



# (EEA) European Environment State and Outlook 2015

- *The ability of soil to deliver ecosystem services is under increasing pressure.*
  - **ESS: food production, biodiversity pools and as a regulator of gasses, water and nutrients**
- *Observed rates of soil sealing, erosion, contamination and decline in organic matter all reduce soil capability.*
- ***Suggest that soil protection – legal framework in EU insufficient***

## Protecting, conserving and enhancing natural capital

SYNTHESIS REPORT	GLOBAL MEGATRENDS	EUROPEAN BRIEFINGS	COUNTRY COMPARISONS	COUNTRIES & REGIONS
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	5–10 year trends	20+ years outlook	Progress to policy targets
➤ Terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity			□
➤ Land use and soil functions			No target
➤ Ecological status of freshwater bodies			⊗
➤ Water quality and nutrient loading			□
➤ Air pollution and its ecosystem impacts			□
➤ Marine and coastal biodiversity			⊗
➤ Climate change impacts on ecosystems			No target

Improving trends dominate		Largely on track	
Trends show mixed picture		Partially on track	
Deteriorating trends dominate		Largely not on track	



**Thank you for your  
attention!**

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/soil/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/soil/index_en.htm)