

Land use / “Land take” policies

Brief description and main aims:

Under the *European Green Deal*, Europe’s new sustainable growth strategy, the European Commission has put forward several proposals to restore nature and biodiversity and to protect European soils. The proposals for a Nature Restoration Law (published in June 2022) and the EU *Soil Monitoring Law* (published in July 2023) both build on the *EU Biodiversity and Soil strategies* and the *Zero Pollution Action Plan*, the *Forest Strategy*, and other communications under the *EU Green Deal* strategy.

The Nature Restoration Law requires Member States to put in place nature restoration measures with the aim to jointly cover, as a Union target, at least 20% of land and 20% of the sea areas by 2030. Restoration measures shall be in place on at least 30% by 2030 of the total area of all habitat types listed in the Regulation that is not in good condition and on at least 60% by 2040 and 80% by 2050. It also requires governments to draw up national restoration plans.

The *Soil Monitoring Law* aims at achieving healthy soils in the EU by 2050 and at restoring the basic functions of soil so that they can contribute to address the EU’s objectives of achieving climate neutrality and becoming resilient to climate change.

Why FIEC is dealing with this topic:

Despite efforts at EU and global level, biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation continue at an alarming rate, harming people, the economy and the climate. This has been widely documented, for example in reports by the *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (IPCC). There is therefore an urgent need to restore nature and biodiversity in the EU by setting common EU targets.

However, the proposal for a *Nature Restoration Law* envisaged major interventions in land use and urban spatial planning without taking into account different societal interests, such as demographic growth, the great uncertainty about raw materials and the need for self-sufficiency, (social) housing and climate resilience. In particular, setting binding targets for the increase of green areas in certain ecosystems could make it more difficult to build critical and energy infrastructure, houses or extract raw materials in EU countries, thereby making the EU strategically independent.

These shortcomings have been addressed: The final text takes into account socio-economic interests and local conditions.

The proposal for a Soil Monitoring Directive would require EU countries to regularly monitor and assess the quality and health of their soils. It introduces new EU-wide definitions of "artificial land", "land take" and the so-called "land take mitigation principles".

Actions and key dates:

- 19/01/2023** → Meeting with the European Commission on EU Soil Health Law.
- 27/02/2023** → [Letter to EU institutions](#) on *Nature Restoration Law*.
- 23/02/2023** → [FIEC Position Paper](#) on *Nature Restoration Law*.
- 28/03/2023** → Meeting with the European Parliament on *Nature Restoration Law*.
- 05/07/2023** → Proposal for *Soil Monitoring Law* published.
- 12/07/2023** → European Parliament adopts position on *Nature Restoration Law*.
- 19/07/2023** → Start of trilogue negotiations on *Nature Restoration Law*.
- 24/10/2023** → FIEC Position Paper on *Soil Monitoring Law*.
- 03/11/2023** → Feedback period on *Soil Monitoring Law* closes.
- 10/11/2023** → Agreement on *Nature Restoration Law* between EU institutions.
- 08/01/2024** → [Press Release](#) on provisional agreement on *Nature Law*.
- 17/06/2024** → Environment Council formally adopts *Nature Restoration Law* and General Approach on *Soil Law*.
- 27/06/24** → Messages from FIEC on *Soil Monitoring Law* ahead of trilogue negotiations.