

Topic: Nature Restoration & Soil Monitoring Law

Brief description and main aims:

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*.

The Nature Restoration Law sets legally binding restoration targets for a broad range of ecosystems and aims at covering at least 20% of the EU land and sea areas by 2030 with nature restoration measures. It also aims to achieve the “no net loss” of green urban spaces by 2030, a 5% increase of green urban spaces by 2050, and a net gain of green space integrated into buildings and infrastructure.

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.

Over the past decades, a weak and fragmented Member States’ response in tackling soil degradation has led to an uneven playing field for economic operators.

Why FIEC is dealing with this topic:

Despite the efforts made at EU and global level, biodiversity loss and the degradation of ecosystems continue at an alarming rate, harming people, the economy and the climate.

This is widely documented, e.g., in reports issued by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). It is therefore imperative to restore nature and biodiversity in the EU by setting common EU targets. However, the proposal for a Nature Restoration Law foresees large interventions in land use and urban spatial planning without considering different societal interests, e.g., 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 infrastructure, houses, or to extract raw materials in EU countries.

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

The discussions and negotiations on both proposals are ongoing at the time of writing of this report. Agreements are expected to be reached before the EU elections that are held in June 2024.

Actions and key dates:

- 19/01/2023** → Meeting with the European Commission on EU Soil Health Law.
- 23/02/2023** → [FIEC Position Paper](#) on Nature Restoration Law.
- 27/02/2023** → FIEC letter to EU institutions on Nature Restoration Law.
- 28/03/2023** → Meeting with the European Parliament on Nature Restoration Law.
- 27/04/2023** → Meeting with the European Parliament on Nature Restoration Law.
- 20/06/2023** → General approach of Member States 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.
- 03/11/2023** → End of feedback period on Soil Monitoring Law.