

Permitting Procedures and Land Use

Brief description and main aims:

Despite EU and global efforts, biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation continue, posing serious threats to 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 an urgent need to restore nature and biodiversity across the EU by establishing common targets and coordinated action.

In 2019, the European Commission launched its sustainable growth strategy, the *European Green Deal*, with the objectives of restoring nature, improving biodiversity, and protecting European soils. Building on this strategy, legislative proposals for a Nature Restoration Law (published in June 2022) and the EU *Soil Monitoring Law* (published in July 2023) have been adopted, which also draw on the EU Biodiversity and Soil strategies, the *Zero Pollution Action Plan*, and the *Forest Strategy*.

The *Nature Restoration Law* requires Member States to implement restoration measures covering at least 20% of land and 20% of sea areas by 2030. Measures must also target at least 30% of all habitat types listed in the regulation that are not in good condition by 2030, rising to 60% by 2040 and 80% by 2050. Member States are required to draw up national restoration plans to achieve these targets.

The *Soil Monitoring Law* aims to achieve healthy soils across the EU by 2050. It seeks to restore essential soil functions to support climate neutrality and enhance climate resilience, ensuring soils continue to provide their critical ecological and economic services.

Why FIEC is dealing with this topic:

FIEC calls for a pragmatic, legally sound and efficient approach to environmental sustainability. The urgency of this approach is highlighted by the housing crisis: since 2015, housing prices have risen by more than 20%, while building permits have declined by over 20% in just five years. Total costs have been identified as key challenge, including the costs of construction and lengthy permitting procedures. Streamlining permitting processes and supporting the use of secondary materials are essential to reducing costs and promoting sustainable construction that delivers what is needed most.

Regarding permitting procedures, FIEC highlights redundancies in environmental assessments required by the SEA Directive (*Strategic Environmental Assessments*) and the EIA Directives (*Environmental Impact Assessments*). Requiring assessments both during the preparation of local urban development plans and at the project stage increases administrative burden, delays, and costs.

FIEC supports the objectives of healthy soils and reduced land consumption. However, implementation must allow Member States sufficient flexibility to apply measures in practical and economically viable ways. The *Nature Restoration Law* envisions interventions in land use and urban planning, while the *Soil Monitoring Law* aims to improve soil resilience, enhance management of contaminated sites, and introduce principles to minimise land consumption, particularly regarding soil sealing and erosion. Stricter regulations on land use and nature restoration risk making building land scarcer and more expensive. For instance, the non-deterioration principle is extremely demanding, and FIEC calls for careful consideration and balancing of local social, ecological, and economic factors.

Actions and key dates:

- 23/02/2023** → [FIEC Position Paper](#) on the *Nature Restoration Law* published
- 19/10/2023** → [FIEC Position Paper](#) on the *Soil Monitoring Law* published
- 06/11/2024** → FIEC Voting Recommendation to MEPs in support of postponing the date of application of the EU *Deforestation Regulation* ahead of plenary vote
- 22/08/2025** → FIEC Contribution to the EC JRC work on defining EU-wide *End-of-Waste* criteria for mineral Construction & Demolition Waste
- 27/10/2025** → [FIEC Position Paper](#) titled “*Simplification of Environmental Legislation: Driving Circularity, Decarbonisation and Competitiveness*” published
- Q4/2025** → European Commission scheduled to publish a legislative simplification initiative