

## The EU Soil Strategy for 2030

The official Communication of the European Commission announces a legislative proposal (Soil Health Law) with an impact assessment in 2023. The European Compost Network will soon organise a webinar for its members to get more information on the document directly from the European Commission.

The Communication does not introduce major changes to the current common agricultural policy (CAP) as it is not a legislative document. Member States will draft their CAP Strategic Plans next year and implement them in 2023 without an obligation to provide soil with organic matter to save organics in soil. However, the Communication raises the political profile of soil health and sets a clear direction for the next years with the commitment to adopt a legislative proposal. If the European Commission will adopt the proposal for **the new Soil Health Law (SHL) in 2023**, it could become official already in 2025 and it could introduce new obligations to be included in the national CAP Strategic Plans. For instance, the European Commission will assess in the impact assessment of the SHL how introducing legal requirements for the sustainable use of soil that strengthen the delivery of its ecosystem services. The ECN continuously informs the European Commission of the benefits on water holding capacity that regular compost application can deliver, as reported in the [ECN factsheet](#).

The new Soil Health Law (SHL) will also establish **EU common indicators for soil health** as well as targets and goals to be achieved for 2050. As an exception, the target of the European Farm to Fork Strategy on nutrient losses (reduce nutrient losses by at least 50%) should be achieved in the next 10 years, in line with the European Green Deal. In the next months, a call for application for new members of the **European Commission's expert group on Soil Protection** will be opened. The expert group will be mandated to develop the indicators to be included in the SHL Proposal. The European Commission aims to use the methodology to develop a soil health certificate that should always accompany commerce transactions of land. It means that healthier soil will be more expensive.

The Communication focuses also on **soil contamination and remediation**. In 2022, new actions will be put forward to prevent and reduce emissions of microplastics, PFAS and

other chemicals; in 2023, the SHL will introduce obligations for the Member States to i) identify contaminated sites, ii) set up an inventory and register of those sites and iii) remediate the sites that pose a significant risk to human health and the environment by 2050. By 2024, the European Commission will develop an EU priority list for contaminants of major and/or emerging concern.

The ECN task group on soil and organic matter prepared a **position paper** on ECN's expectations from the Soil Strategy to save organics in soil. The position paper is available on [ECN Website](#).

The EU Soil Thematic Strategy is available [here](#).