



# EU Soil Policy

## Healthy Soils for a Healthy Life



**SoilCare**  
**Final conference**  
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# | We are encountering major ecological crises



**CLIMATE**



**BIODIVERSITY**



**RESOURCES**

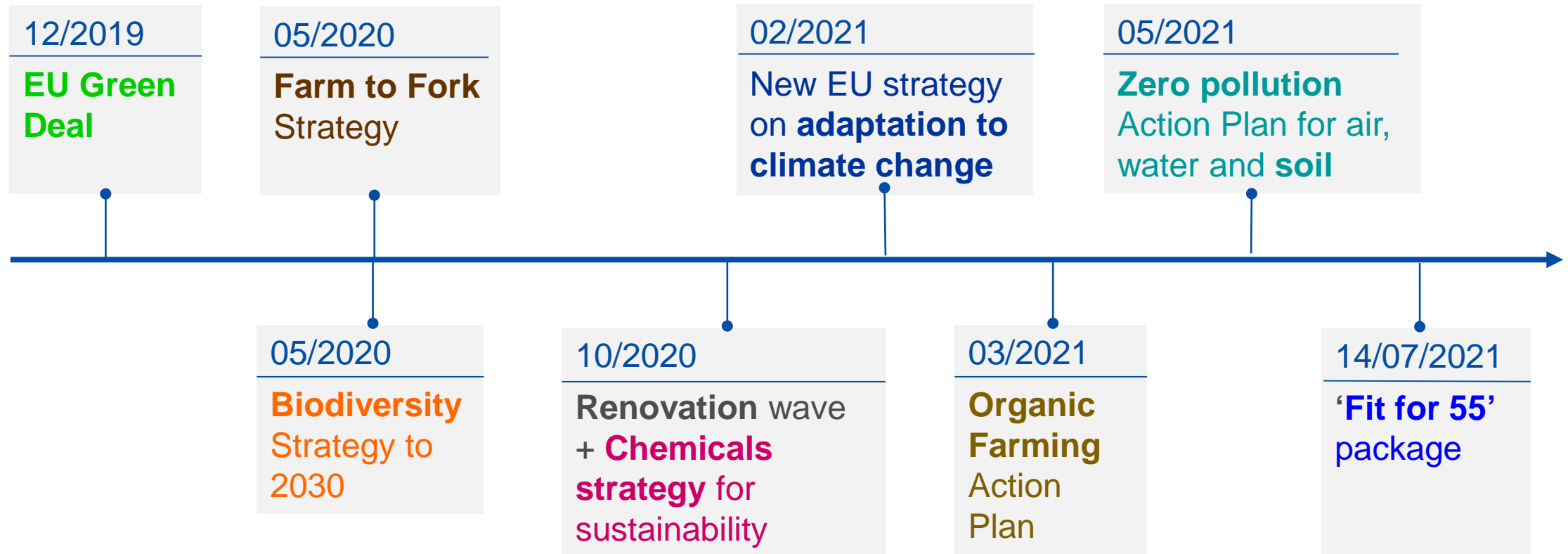


**POLLUTION**





# EU Green Deal: main deliverables relevant for soil



# | The ambition in the EU Biodiversity Strategy

“by 2050 all of the world’s ecosystems are **restored, resilient, and adequately protected**”



# Sustainable food systems in the Farm to Fork Strategy

## SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY



Healthier diets –  
reduce  
overweight



Improve  
animal  
welfare



Food  
affordability

## ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY



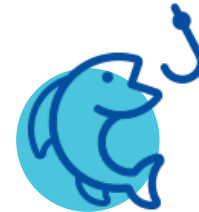
Tackle climate  
change



Protect the  
environment



Preserve  
biodiversity



Sustainable fish  
and seafood  
production



Reduce food  
losses and waste

## ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY



Fairer incomes  
for farmers



Just  
transition



New business & job  
opportunities



# The zero pollution vision for 2050

“Air, water and soil pollution is reduced to levels no longer considered harmful to health and natural ecosystems and that respect the boundaries our planet can cope with, thus creating a toxic-free environment.”

# A new EU soil policy framework: the **EU Biodiversity Strategy**



- It is essential to step up efforts to **protect soil fertility, reduce soil erosion and increase soil organic matter.**
- This should be done by adopting **sustainable soil management practices,** including as part of the CAP.
- Significant progress is also needed on **identifying contaminated soil sites, restoring degraded soils,** defining the conditions for their **good ecological status,** introducing **restoration objectives,** and improving the **monitoring of soil quality.**





## Why healthy soils?

- Soil provides local and global ecosystem services:
  - Food and other biomass production, including in agriculture and forestry
  - Storing, filtering and transforming nutrients, substances and water, as well as replenishing bodies of groundwater;
  - Basis for life and biodiversity, such as habitats, species and genes;
  - Physical platform and cultural environment for humans and human activities;
  - Source of raw materials;
  - Acting as carbon reservoir;
  - Archive of geological, geomorphological and archaeological heritage.
- **Healthy soils** can provide all those services today and tomorrow. Soil and land **degradation** means instead most services are reduced or lost
- That's why we need soil and ecosystem **protection, sustainable soil management, restoration** of degraded ecosystems and soils

# A new EU soil policy framework: next steps (1)



- To address these issues in a comprehensive way and help to fulfil EU and international commitments on land-degradation neutrality, the Commission will **update the EU Soil Thematic Strategy in 2021.**
- The **Zero Pollution Action Plan for Air, Water and Soil COM(2021)400** looked at soil contamination issues.
- Soil sealing and rehabilitation of contaminated brownfields will be addressed in the future **Strategy for a Sustainable Built Environment.**
- A mission in the area of soil health and food under Horizon Europe will aim to develop solutions for restoring soil health and functions

# A new EU soil policy framework: next steps (2)

- Proposal for **legally binding EU nature restoration targets** in 2021 to restore degraded ecosystems, in particular those with the most potential to capture and store carbon and to prevent and reduce the impact of natural disasters.
- This will identify the **conditions** in which the targets must be met, as well as the **most effective measures** to reach them.
- The impact assessment will also look at the possibility of an **EU-wide methodology to map, assess and achieve good condition of ecosystems** so they can deliver benefits such as climate regulation, water regulation, soil health, pollination and disaster prevention and protection.
- New **LULUCF Regulation** on 14.07.2021



# New EU Soil Strategy



## Expected contributions of the Soil Strategy:

- Step up efforts to **protect soil fertility** and reduce soil erosion
- Increase soil organic matter and restore carbon-rich ecosystems
- Protect and enhance soil biodiversity**
- Reduce the rate of land take, urban sprawl and sealing to achieve no net land take by 2050
- Progress in **identifying and remediating contaminated sites** and **address diffuse contamination**
- Address the growing threat of desertification
- Achieve land degradation neutrality by 2030

## By:

- Promoting the adoption of **sustainable soil management practices**
- Setting out actions to restore degraded soils and secure sufficient EU funding to this end
- Improving the monitoring of soil quality
- Adapting and improving the relevant EU policy framework in line with the European Green Deal objectives on climate neutrality, zero pollution, sustainable food systems and resilient ecosystems
- Developing knowledge and research
- Accelerating the transition towards sustainable soil management and the necessary behavioural change**
- Steering EU global action on soil under the Rio Conventions, EU external action and development cooperation.

# New EU Soil Strategy



- **Roadmap** consultation: 4 weeks, closed on 10 December 2020 with 228 replies
- **Open Public Consultation**: 12 weeks, closed on 27 April 2021 with 1669 replies
- Various stakeholder conferences in the past few years
- Regular discussions with MS authorities in the **EU Expert Group on Soil Protection**
- **Adoption foreseen in October 2021**