

**COMMON FORUM on
Contaminated Land in Europe
October 1, 2021
EU soil policy - debriefing and preparatory meeting
(online)**

MEETING REPORT



Session 1 – Welcome address

The COMMON FORUM Post-SEG online meeting 2021 was opened by Dietmar Müller-Grabherr.

A new country representative was welcomed:

- Spain/Catalonia: Luisa Nadal (Agència de Residus de Catalunya - Departament de Gestió de la Contaminació del Sòl)

Objectives of the meeting were to share and discuss information, positions and results of the discussions at the Soil Expert Group (SEG) meeting organised by the European Commission (DG ENV) held on 30 September 2021 as well as upcoming issues until the end of 2021.

Session 2 – Soil expert group meeting, 30 October 2021

Impressions of the participants gained at the SEG meeting

Several COMMON FORUM members have participated in the SEG meeting held on 30 September 2021. A first debriefing and exchange of ideas was initiated on how COMMON FORUM might cooperate in ongoing processes and how a new Soil Thematic Strategy could be supported in future.

Main findings of the SEG meeting:

- The European Commission will set up a rough outline of a new EU Soil Strategy, hence is not intending further consultation beforehand.
- Expected: a new policy framing towards ‘soil health’ and ‘good ecological status’, the adoption of sustainable soil management practices and actions to restore degraded soils.
- The tentative date for the **new EU Soil Strategy (STS)** is **by November 17, 2021** (an EC proposal for nature restoration targets is flagged up on December 14, 2021), hence it could as well get end of 2021.
- It is still not finally clarified whether the new STS will involve legislation as well, though at the time being it does not seem likely immediately by 2021 within the new STS, but rather on the mid- to long-term. Obviously EC will need to react to a resolution on soil protection (2021/2548(RSP)¹ of the European Parliament taken by 28 April 2021 calling “to design an EU-wide common legal framework”.
- Regarding monitoring, an EU priority list for soil contaminants is foreseen, likely JRC will be leading on this issue.
- Legally binding targets on soil are foreseen to be defined with regard to EU Nature Restoration Plans².

As soon as the new EU Soil Strategy will be adopted COMMON FORUM will closely follow up any processes for preparing its implementation and support for consistency in integration to wider soil

¹ *The European Parliament ...*

- ✓ 9. Stresses that soil, which is a common resource, is, unlike air or water, not covered by specific legislation; welcomes, consequently, the Commission ambition to propose a coherent and integrated EU soil protection framework;
- ✓ 10. Calls on the Commission to design an EU-wide common legal framework, with full respect for the subsidiarity principle, for the protection and sustainable use of soil, addressing all major soil threats,

² According to discussion at stakeholder workshops the envisaged legislative proposal may consider a **staged approach** defining (i) a first core set of targets in a quantified manner (e.g. EU member states need to achieve 30 % of its landscape being nature protection areas until 2030; here Soil Organic Carbon (SOC) is as well under debate) and (ii) secondly provide for describing a process how further targets on key commitments (e.g. “progress in restoring polluted soil sites”) shall be derived.

policy issues within the EU Green Deal. Teaming-up for dedicated working groups (e.g. WG Soil as a Resource) will be crucial.

Session 3 – What’s on until end of 2021

Draft EEA indicator and threshold report “Soil monitoring in Europe”

The EEA and ETC/ULS has forwarded a draft report on soil indicators and threshold “Soil monitoring in Europe – indicators and thresholds for soil quality assessments” to EIONET NRC Soil partners as well as external experts (i.a. COMMON FORUM, ESP) for review and comments mainly on indicator definitions and specific thresholds. The deadline for statements on the draft version is 29 October 2021.

The report covers all soil issues and contains one chapter on contaminants in soil (chapter 5), including diffuse and point source pollution. However, it is noted that the EEA Indicator on contaminated sites will be discussed technically in depth in the EEA WG Soil Contamination.

Since COMMON FORUM and its members are officially invited for review, the CF secretariat will forward this draft report and intends to react and prepare a draft response for EEA (focussing on chapter 5), which will be circulated for information and possible comments by 15 October 2021.

The EEA Indicators and Thresholds report is publically available through this link: <https://www.eionet.europa.eu/etcs/etc-uls/products/uls-reports>

1st EUSO Stakeholders Meeting (JRC, 19 – 21 October 2021)

The Joint Research Centre (JRC) is organising the first EUSO Stakeholders Forum from 19 – 21 October 2021 in an online format. The event will reflect the challenges facing soil within the various strategies of the Green Deal (e.g. the Soil, Biodiversity and Farm2Fork strategies, Zero Pollution Action Plan) and Horizon Europe’s proposed Mission on Soil Health and Food. The meeting will also establish four dedicated Working Groups to address scientific and policy questions: soil monitoring, data integration, soil pollution, erosion and biodiversity.

On 20 October 2021 (morning session), a soil pollution workshop is foreseen with the scope to launch a working group to support the development of the soil component of the 2022 zero pollution monitoring and outlook reports.

<https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/event/other-event/euso-stakeholders-forum>

CF secretariat is invited to give a presentation within this workshop, which will be distributed beforehand. CF secretariat will inform on the outcomes of the workshop.

NICOLE Fall 2021 Workshop (20 – 22 October 2021, Porto, Portugal and online)

NICOLE is organising the Fall 2021 Workshop as a hybrid event from 20 – 22 October 2021 on the future of land management. There is the possibility for COMMON FORUM experts to participate free of charge.

Link to the fall workshop 2021 agenda: https://nicole.org/pagina/26/Upcoming_events.html

COMMON FORUM autumn 2021 meeting

This year, the next COMMON FORUM autumn meeting as an online event will be organised later than usual and thus after the EUSO Stakeholder meeting and in order to follow-up the publication of the forthcoming new EU Soil Strategy.

To follow-up these new developments and information it is intended to adapt the format of the autumn meeting by having a sequence of half-day meetings on Thursday mornings.

Tentative dates:

- Thursday, 4 November 2021 (10:00 – 13:00 CET)
- Thursday, 25 November 2021 (10:00 – 13:00 CET)
- Thursday, 2 December 2021 (10:00 – 13:00 CET)

Margot de Cleen informed about the European Joint Programme for agricultural soils and their survey on soil quality indicators, which might be linked to the transition to healthy soils. It was proposed to invite colleagues of the EJP soil quality project to the next Soil as a Resource Working Group meeting within the CF autumn meeting for exchange and discussion.

<https://ejpsoil.eu/>

https://ejpsoil.eu/fileadmin/projects/ejpsoil/WP2/Deliverable_2.2_Stocktaking_on_soil_quality_indicators_and_associated_decision_support_tools_including ICT_tools.pdf

Resolving the HCH and Lindane issues in the EU | TAUW

The European Commission has commissioned a consortium with TAUW as leading consultant to identify HCH contaminated sites in the EU Member States and to provide a full roadmap for sustainable management of six selected HCH contaminated sites.

In a first step, a comprehensive inventory of (potential) HCH-affected sites in the EU was elaborated and sent to EU Member States for review.

Since TAUW will present this report at the meeting of the European Commission in November 2021, there are still concerns among some CF members that not all their comments and amendments have been considered so far.

Antonella Vecchio will forward the disclaimer.

Tasks List

Action	Responsible	Deadline
Comments to EEA soil indicator and threshold report	Dietmar, CF members	15/29 October 2021
Finalizing dates of CF autumn meeting 2021	Dietmar	15 October 2021
Organise a WG SaR session with EJP Soil at the next autumn meeting 2021	Margot	October 2021

The CF 2021 pre meeting was attended by:

Vivienne	Ahern	Ireland
Christian	Andersen	Denmark
Ana Isabel	Alzola Echazarra	Spain
Juan	Bartoll Navas	Spain
Margot	De Cleen	The Netherlands
Saïd	El Fadili	Belgium
Jörg	Frauenstein	Germany
Valérie	Guerin	France
Sami	Kaabouch	France
Co	Molenaar	The Netherlands
Dietmar	Müller-Grabherr	Austria
Luisa	Nadal Jaume	Spain
Sabine	Neulen	Germany
Yvonne	Ohlsson	Sweden
Olaf	Ojala	Estonia
Gunnhild	Preus-Olsen	Norway
Jussi	Reinikainen	Finland
Andrea	Spanischberger	Austria
Rudolf	Stähli	Switzerland
Pol	Tock	Luxembourg
Åsa	Valley	Sweden
Regina	Vilão	Portugal
Bente	Villumsen	Denmark
Antonella	Vecchio	Italy
Martha	Wepner-Banko	Austria
Christiane	Wermeille	Switzerland

Note: presentations of this meeting are available for download at www.commonforum.eu

October 12, 2021
Dietmar Müller-Grabherr, Martha Wepner-Banko