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Statement

New pillar of the farming Green Deal, the EU soil monitoring law is considered as acceptable by Copa and Cogeca

In its package of new measures entitled "sustainable use of natural resources", the European Commission has decided to launch today a new initiative focusing on soil quality monitoring. The proposal, which aims to remedy the degradation of 60% of European soils, will have implications in agriculture. Copa and Cogeca welcome this initiative, even if some specific elements will need to be improved by co-legislators.

Farmers and forest-owners have always taken the core fundamental of their sector, healthy soils, seriously. It is the bedrock of our livelihoods, the foundation for food and fibre production, and the base of our existence. The farming community has also been a watchdog, pointing out the problems associated with the ever-increasing artificialization of land on the continent. In this context, we welcome the European Commission's attention to this issue.

Now that the text will be discussed jointly by the European Parliament and Council, there are some fundamentals which Copa and Cogeca will be looking towards to be seen taken into account.

First, as with a number of initiatives already presented, it is important that the Commission's initiatives present a timeline that remains rational and realistic to allow for the fundamentals of the monitoring and reporting governance to be set-up; and for farmers and land managers to be able to have time to implement the relevant measures in time to show adequate changes.

When it comes to the healthy soil assessment, Copa and Cogeca call for clear distinctions between healthy and unhealthy soils and not hinge upon an arbitrary indicator. Additionally, it is of utmost importance that the certification of healthy soils has an added value component to farmers on the ground and that Sustainable Soil Management practices remain open to include all farming models.

In the end, the point on which the proposal is still too weak, in our view, is on land take. It is unfortunate that the provision in the law does not include strong targets for Member States to ensure the constant removal of agricultural and forestry land by land take and soil sealing. It would have been preferrable that this law had been stronger on this issue.

**-END-**

Translations will be available in DE, ES, FR, IT, PL and RO on the Copa-Cogeca website soon.

About us - Copa and Cogeca are the united voice of farmers and agri-cooperatives in the EU. Together, we ensure that EU agriculture is sustainable, innovative and competitive, while guaranteeing food security for 500 million people throughout Europe. >>> More information [www.copa-cogeca.eu](http://www.copa-cogeca.eu)

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