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Roadmap „ New Soil Strategy - healthy soil for a healthy life"
Statement of the German Soil Association (BVB)

8th December 2020

The German Soil Association e.V. (BVB) welcomes that the European Commission will revise the Thematic Strategy for Soil Protection and underlines the importance of soil as a limited resource.

To our opinion the following measures are essential for the preservation of soils and their natural functions:

- Soils are one of the world's hotspots for biodiversity. Therefore its protection, which has been neglected until now, must be integrated into all policy areas.
- In order to obtain comparable data on changes to the soils across the EU, permanent observation and monitoring plots must be established across the whole territory. Changes in soil properties (e.g. organic carbon contents) can only be monitored in long-term.
- The Thematic Strategy for Soil Protection must contain specific binding targets for good ecological soil health and regulations on land use, measures and support programmes (e.g. soil pollution, soil compaction, soil biomass and diversity of organisms).
- Preventive measures for soil protection are more cost-effective than the removal of pollutants, contaminants, pesticides and soil compaction.

- There is an urgent need to enhance public awareness for soils and their protection!
- The principles of good farming practice must be adapted throughout the EU.
- Any form of land use that leads to humus depletion must be avoided, not only in order to protect the climate. This applies above all to agriculture on organic soils. Drainage, breaking up and use irreversibly destroys these soils, and at the same time releases up to 40 t CO_2 per hectare per year. Positive effects of a SOC stock increase on nutrient and water storage, soil erosion, biodiversity and food security are crucial for climate change adaptation.
- Soil acidity is also an important threat for agricultural soils as well as for forest soils and should be diminished. In a long-term soil acidification raises different soil problems and reduces several soil functions. The neutralisation of acidic soils has a direct beneficial effect on physical, chemical, and biological soil characteristics. Soil biodiversity will be protected.