



# **Are natural resource reduction targets in the EU achievable? The case of land**

**Friends of the Earth Conference  
*Targeting a more resource efficient Europe*  
Brussels, 5 November 2013**

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# Setting the context

# Some land-related issues



- ❖ Annual land-take of some 1,000 km<sup>2</sup> in the EU
  - An area the size of Berlin (= 270 ha/day) taken over by urban and infrastructure expansion – every year!
- ❖ In the decade 1990–2000, the sealed area in the EU-15 increased by 6%
  - The demand for land is continuing to increase
- ❖ Land use trade-offs
- ❖ Land "imports"
- ❖ ...

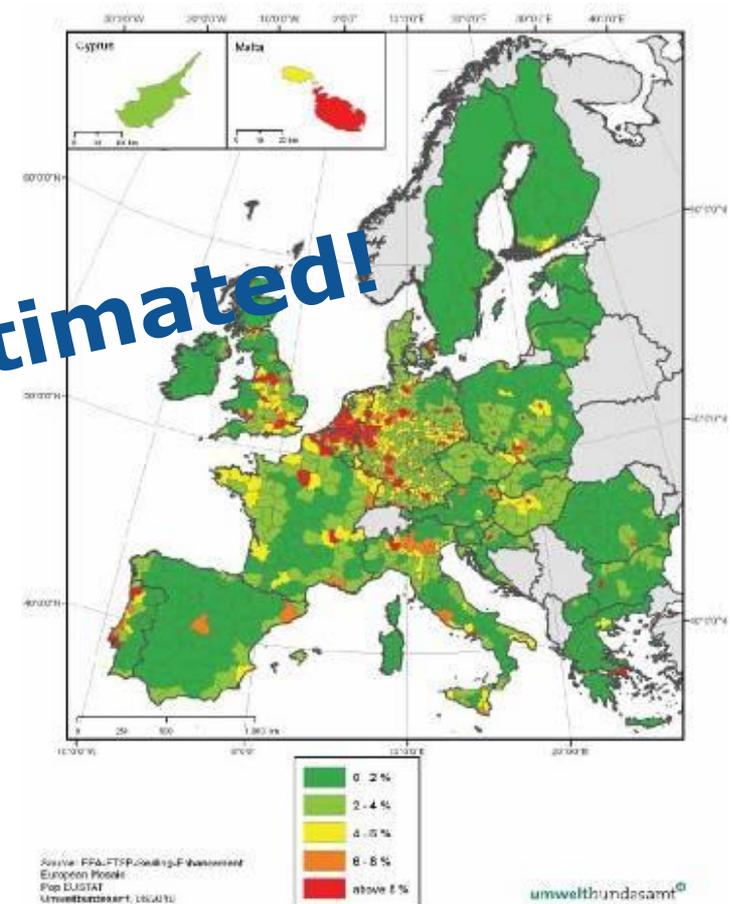
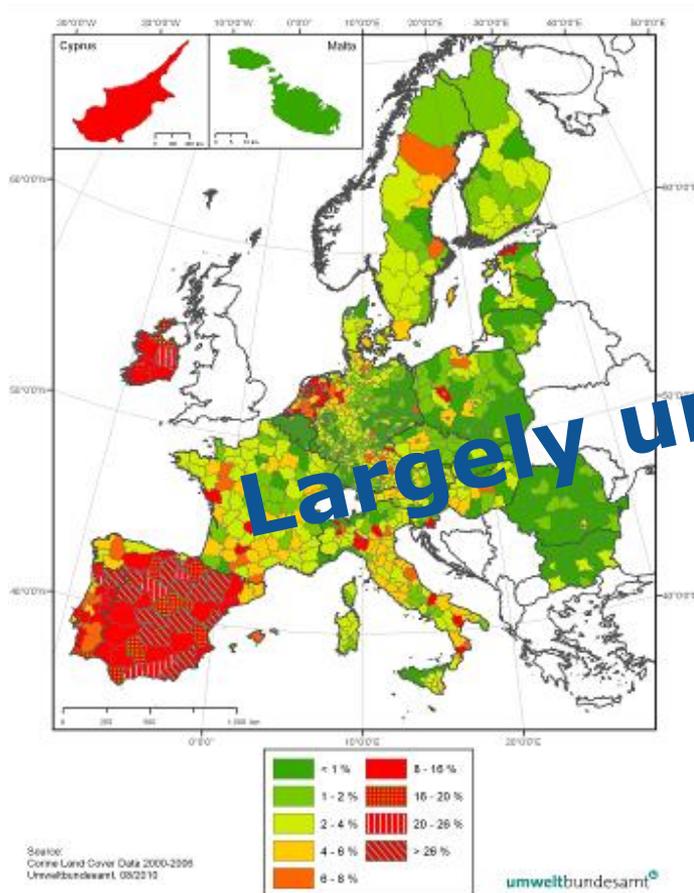


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# The magnitude of soil sealing in the EU

Land take per administrative unit in the period 2000-2006

Soil sealed surface in 2006



# Contaminated sites and brownfields



- ❖ Potentially contaminated sites in EU-25: between **3.25 and 3.6 million**
- ❖ Estimated contaminated sites in EU-25: between **450,000 and 600,000**
- ❖ Estimated surface area of brownfields:
  - In Saxony: **920 km<sup>2</sup>**
  - In England: **637 km<sup>2</sup>**

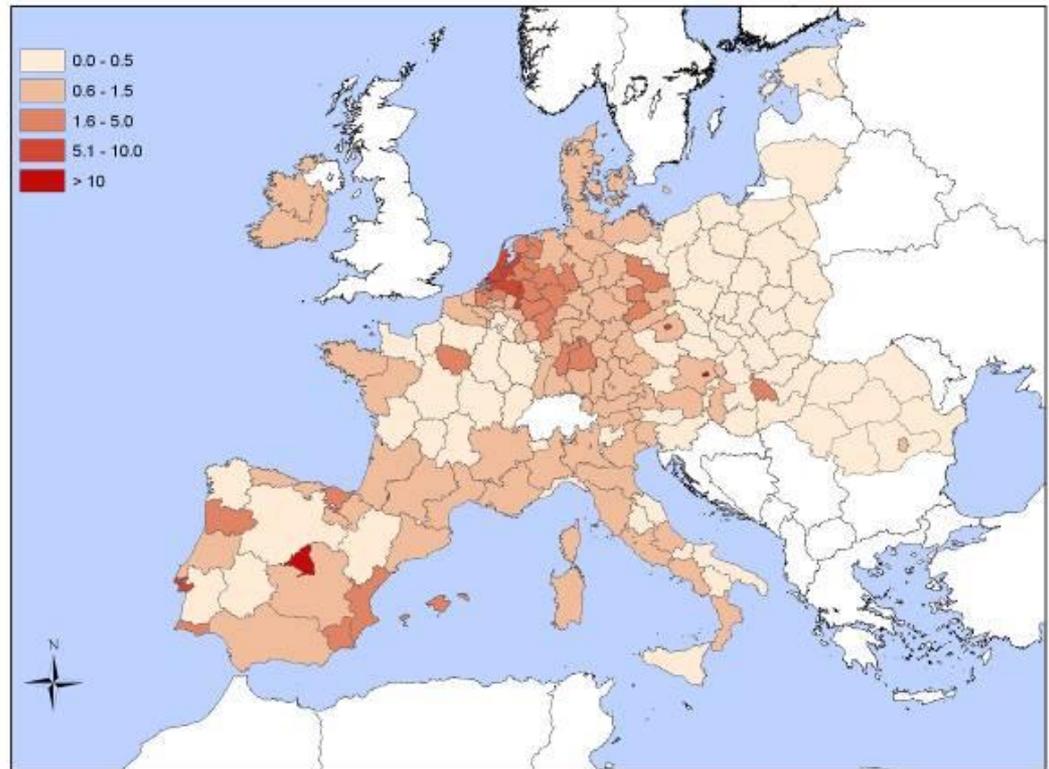
**Large regeneration potential**

**=**

**economic development with less or no land take!**

# Important threat to food security

From 1990-2006, a potential agricultural production capability equivalent to a total of **6.1 million tonnes** of wheat has been lost in 19 MSs, with large regional variations.





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# The policy context



- *Milestone: By 2020, EU policies take into account their direct and indirect impact on land use in the EU and globally, and the rate of land take is on track with an aim to achieve no net **land take** by 2050; **soil erosion** is reduced and the **soil organic matter** increased, with remedial work on **contaminated sites** well underway.*
  
- *The Commission will (...)*
  - *Further develop the scientific knowledge-base on biotic material, land-use effects and trends, and spatial planning, including impacts at global level and effects on trading partners, and highlight best practices in the Member States, **leading to a Communication on land use** (in 2014);*
  - *Publish **guidelines** on best practice to limit, mitigate or compensate soil sealing (in 2012).*

# The 7th EAP (1)



## Living well, within the limits of our planet

Proposal for a general Union  
Environment Action Programme

Proposal:  
COM(2012) 710, 29.11.2012

Final **unofficial** text:  
PE-CONS 13-2012/0337(COD),  
12.09.2013

### Priority objective 1:

#### To protect, conserve and enhance the Union's natural capital

- 22. (...) *Environmental considerations including water protection and biodiversity conservation should be integrated into planning decisions relating to land use so that they are made more sustainable, with a view to making progress towards the objective of "no net land take", by 2050.*
- 23. *To reduce the most significant man-made pressures on land, soil and other ecosystems in Europe, action will be taken to ensure that decisions, relating to land use, at all relevant levels give proper consideration to environmental as well as social and economic impacts. The Rio+20 outcome, recognising the economic and social significance of good land management, called for a 'land degradation neutral world'. **The Union and its Member States should reflect on how best to make such a commitment operational within their respective competencies.** The Union and its Member States should also reflect as soon as possible on how soil quality issues could be addressed using a targeted and proportionate risk-based approach within a binding legal framework. **Targets should also be set for sustainable land use and soil.***

# The 7th EAP (2)



## Living well, within the limits of our planet

*Proposal for a general Union  
Environment Action Programme*

Proposal:  
COM(2012) 710, 29.11.2012

Final **unofficial** text:  
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12.09.2013

*26. In order to protect, conserve and enhance the Union's natural capital, the 7th EAP shall ensure that by 2020 (...) **(e) land is managed sustainably in the Union, soil is adequately protected and the remediation of contaminated sites is well underway.***

*(...)*

*This requires, in particular (...) (v) increasing efforts to reduce soil erosion and increase soil organic matter, to remediate contaminated sites and to enhance the integration of land use aspects into coordinated decision-making involving all relevant levels of government, **supported by the adoption of targets on soil and on land as a resource, and land planning objectives.***



- 4.2.6.1. Reducing the anthropogenic pressure on ecosystems from **land take**: *Annual land take (i.e. the increase of artificial land) does not exceed 800 km<sup>2</sup> per year at the EU level by 2020.*
- 4.2.6.2. Reducing **soil erosion**: *The area of land in the EU that is subject to soil erosion of more than 10 tonnes per hectare per year should be reduced by at least 25% by 2020.*
- 4.2.6.3. Maintaining **soil organic matter** levels: *By 2020 soil organic matter levels do not decrease overall and increase for soils currently with less than 3.5% organic matter.*
- 4.2.6.4. Identifying and remediating **contaminated sites**: *Member States should have started undertaking remediation actions on identified contaminated sites by 2020.*



# Rio+20: 'The future we want'

205. We [the Heads of State and Government and high-level representatives] recognize **the economic and social significance of good land management, including soil**, particularly its contribution to economic growth, biodiversity, sustainable agriculture and food security, eradicating poverty, the empowerment of women, addressing climate change and improving water availability. (...)

206. We recognize the need for urgent action to reverse land degradation. In view of this, **we will strive to achieve a land-degradation neutral world in the context of sustainable development**. This should act to catalyse financial resources from a range of public and private sources.

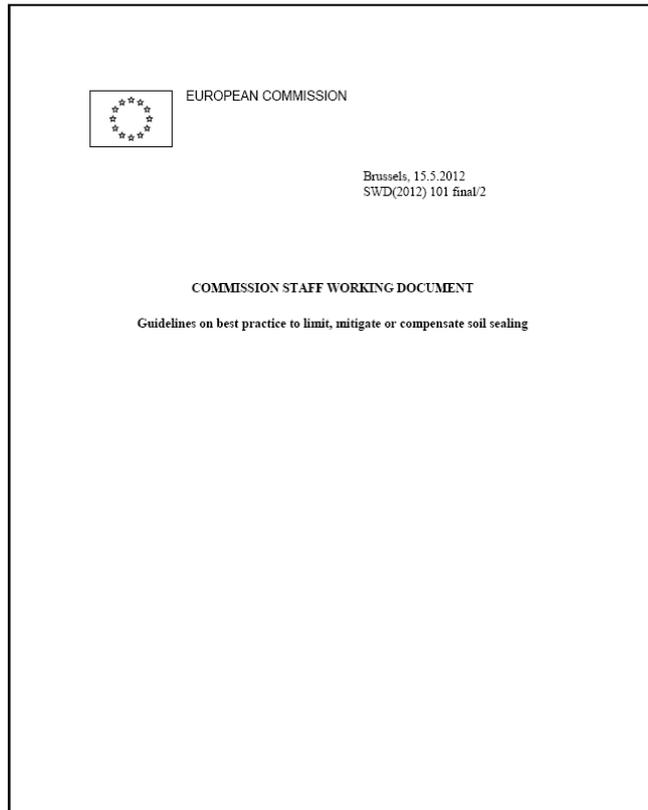


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# Guidelines on best practice to limit, mitigate or compensate soil sealing

SWD(2012) 101 final/2, 15 May 2012

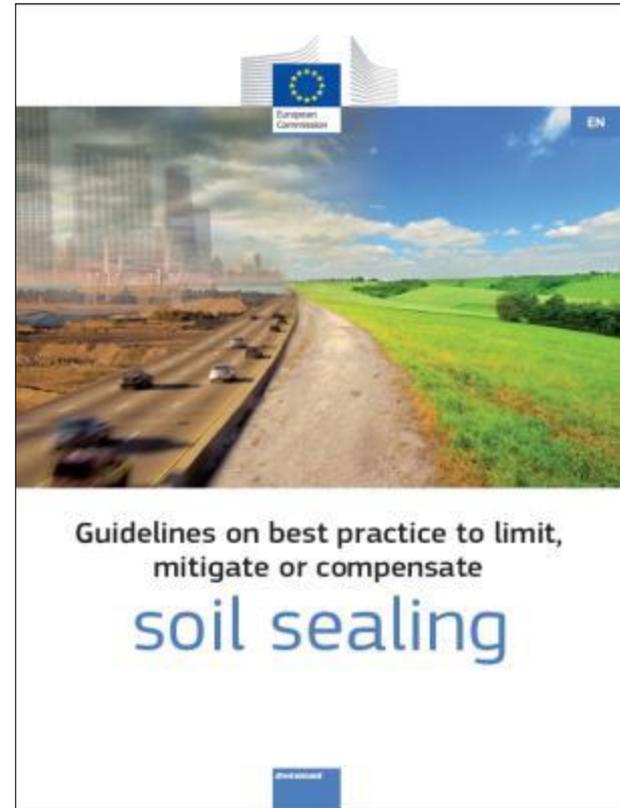
[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/soil/sealing\\_guidelines.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/soil/sealing_guidelines.htm)



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# Thank you for your attention!



<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/soil/index.htm>