

Stockholm 10 December 2020

Feedback re EU roadmap for a New Soil Strategy – healthy soil for a healthy life (Ref. Ares (2020)6391319 - 05/11/2020)

Svemin is the national industry association for mines and for mineral and metal producers in Sweden, representing around 50 companies which employ about 13,000 people in production, exploration and mining.

Svemin acknowledges that soil erosion and soil degradation is a serious problem in a European perspective and support the ambition to address this issue in a comprehensive way and to help achieve land degradation neutrality by 2030.

There are clear links between soil management and other environmental policy areas as well as with e.g. the development of infrastructure, urbanization and industrial development. This means that there is a need for a holistic approach that will guarantee policy coherence and that deals with the sometimes conflicting objectives in a balanced way.

Applying a holistic perspective, we question that “no net land take” is an appropriate target. Almost all land in Europe is affected by human activities in one way or another. We think the focus should shift from “no land take” to “sustainable land use”.

We think that a common EU soil strategy should focus on minimizing or reversing soil degradation. However, considering differences in soil characteristics, climate, land use patterns etc we think that the setting of soil quality standards should still be the responsibility of the member states. Nevertheless, EU guidance on measures for soil protection would still be of value. Another important area would be to support research to increase the understanding of the function of soil ecosystems as well as regarding efficient measures to revert soil degradation.

We are interested and willing to take an active part in a dialogue between our sector and other interested parties to bring forward best practices on soil conservation and restoration that are applied within our sector.

With best regards,

Svemin

Lars-Åke Lindahl
Director Environment and Coordinator EU Affairs

Kerstin Brinnen
Director legal affairs