



Legal and policy framework on land degradation – EU and international state of play

Berlin, 8.12.2014



**Patrick Wegerdt,
International relations, DG Environment, European Commission**

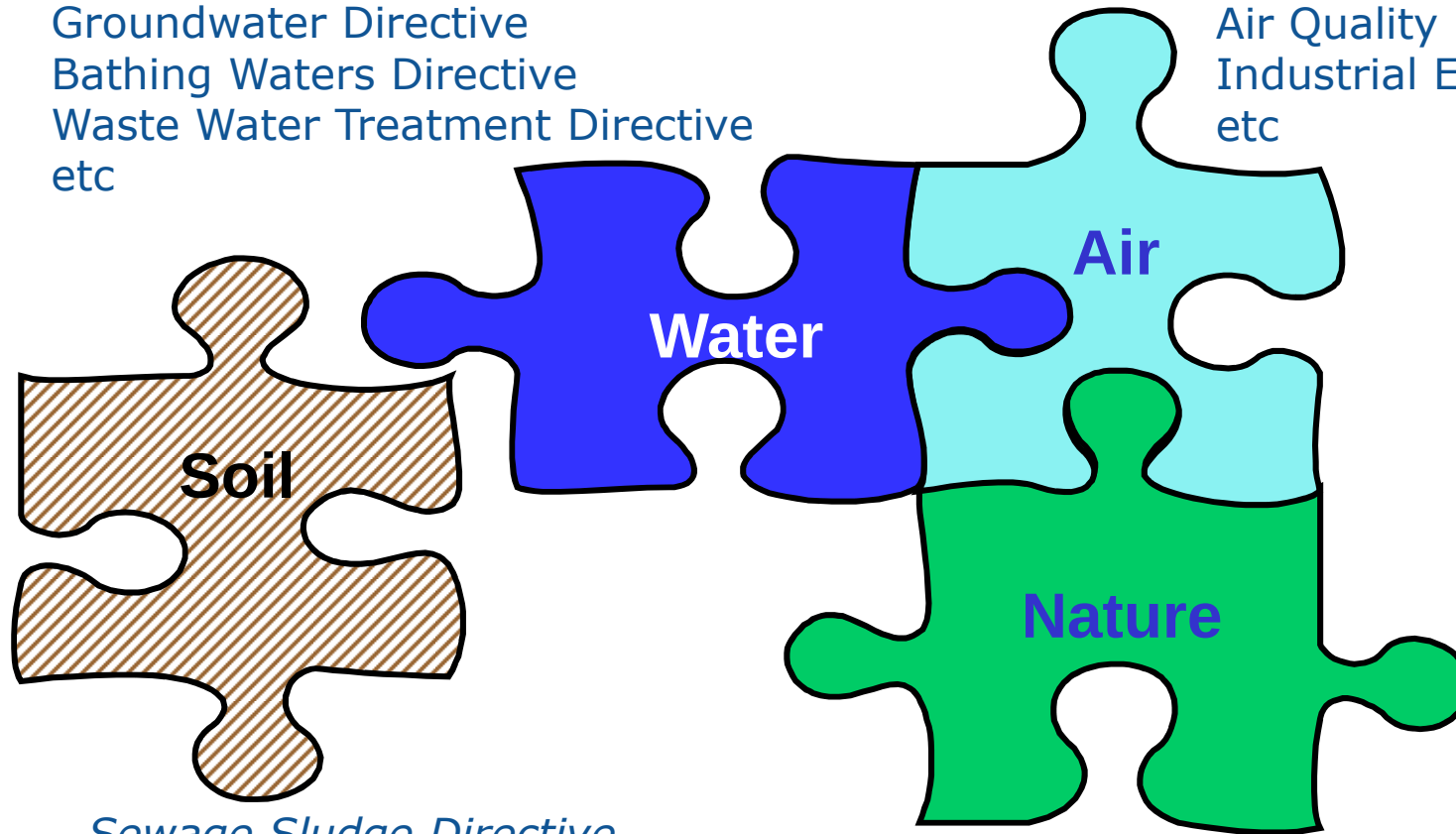
patrick.wegerdt@ec.europa.eu

No specific legislation on soil protection at EU level



Water Framework Directive
Groundwater Directive
Bathing Waters Directive
Waste Water Treatment Directive
etc

Air Quality Directives
Industrial Emissions Directive
etc



*Sewage Sludge Directive
Industrial Emissions Directive
Common Agricultural Policy
(draft Soil Framework Directive
COM(2006) 232 - withdrawn 2014)*

Habitats Directive
Birds Directive
Invasive Alien Species Regulation
etc

Policy at EU level – the 7th Environmental Action Programme (1)



Living well, within
the limits of our planet

Environment Action Programme to 2020

(Decision 1386/2013/EU of the
European Parliament and of the
Council, 20 November 2013)

Priority objective 1:

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

- 23. (...) *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.*
- 25. *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.***



Policy at EU level – the 7th EAP (2)



Living well, within the limits of our planet

*Proposal for a general Union
Environment Action Programme*

28. 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 (...) (vi) 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.



International level - 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.



International level - Draft SDGs (1)



Draft Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as proposed by the United Nations Open Working Group (OWG) on SDGs in July 2014:

1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all
5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries
11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss**
16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development





15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

15.3 by 2020, combat desertification, and restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land-degradation neutral world

[...]





Terms of reference of IWG (Decision COP(11)/L.19):

- (1) establish a science-based definition of land degradation neutrality in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas;
- (2) develop options relating to arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas that Parties might consider should they strive to achieve land degradation neutrality; and
- (3) advise the Convention on the implications for its current and future strategy, programmes and the resource requirements

IWG to consist of a maximum of five representatives from each region, nominated by the respective regional groups on the basis of nominations by national Governments: Africa, Latin America and Caribbean, Asia, Central & Eastern Europe, Western Europe and others – 25 in all.





Definition of LDNW:

- LDN is a state whereby the amount of healthy and productive land resources, necessary to support vital ecosystem services, remains stable or increases within specified temporal and spatial scales. LDN can occur naturally or as the result of improved land management and ecosystem restoration (February 2014)
- Land Degradation Neutrality [in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas] is a state whereby the amount of healthy [and productive] land resources, [necessary to support ecosystem services and enhance food security], remains stable or increases within specified temporal and spatial scales (July 2014)
- 3rd (and final) meeting of IWG planned for March 2015, in Rome.

Conclusions



At EU level:

- Aim is for SDGs to be 'universally applicable' therefore any SDG on land degradation, including LDNW, would in principle apply to EU/MSs. At present, no existing single overarching legal or policy framework at EU level addressing land degradation.

At global level:

- Question remains open as to whether the adoption of an SDG on land degradation, including LDNW, will lead to a group of interested countries proposing a legal framework at international level, either through the UNCCD or another multilateral agreement or body.

In either case, the inclusion of land degradation in the post-2015 development framework as part of an SDG will be crucial to effectively addressing the issue in the future.





Thank you for your attention

2015

International
Year of Soils

