Historical overview on soil protection policies in the European Union (1952 - 2006)

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Soil protection policies are established when there is a perceived threat by the affected population:

Do we have a soil degradation problem in Europe?
National Soil Protection Policies in Europe (partial list)

• 1907 Establishment of the Icelandic Soil Conservation Service (LR)
• 1987 Dutch Soil Protection Act
• 1989 Italian Soil Protection Act
• 1992 Czechoslovakian Soil Protection Act
• 1993 French National Soil Remediation and Clean-up Policy
• 1997 Hungarian National Environmental Programme
• 1998 Federal German Soil Protection Act
• 2004 Soil Action Plan of England and Wales
Phases in the soil policy of three EU countries

(Veenman, 2006)
European initiatives from 1952 to 2006

• 1952 First meeting of European Soil Survey Organizations, Ghent, Belgium
• 1955 Working Party on Soil Classification and Survey, FAO
• 1959 first draft Soil Map of Europe (1:2,500,000 scale)
• 1972 European Soil Charter adopted by Council of Europe
• 1985 Soil Map at 1:1,000,000 scale of the European Communities published by the European Commission
• 1986 Digital version of the EC Soil Map
• 1994 creation of the Soil Information Focal Point (SIFP) at JRC
European Soil Database: WRB classification

http://eusoils.jrc.it
European initiatives from 1952 to 2006 (cont.)

• 1996 creation of the European Soil Bureau at the JRC
• 1998 Bled Protocol on Soil Protection signed within the Alpine Convention
• 1998 Workshop “Soil Protection Policies within the EU”, Bonn, Germany
• 1999 First European Soil Forum, Berlin, Germany
European initiatives from 1952 to 2006 (cont.)

- **2001** Workshop “The Support of Soil Science Research to the European Sustainable Development”, Uppsala, Sweden
- **2001** Second European Soil Forum, Napoli, Italy
- **2002** 6th Environment Action Programme includes a strategy for soil protection
- **2003** Revised European Charter for the Protection and Sustainable Management of Soil adopted by Council of Europe
European initiatives from 1952 to 2006 (cont.)

- **2004** Reports from Technical Working Groups Established under the Thematic Strategy for Soil Protection, EUR 21319
- **2004** VitalSoil Conference by Dutch Presidency, Scheveningen, The Netherlands
- **2005** Extended stakeholder consultation on the Soil Strategy
- **2006** Soil Thematic Strategy adopted by the European Commission
Global Soil Protection Legal Frameworks

- 1982 World Soil Charter, FAO/UNEP
- 1994 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- 1995 Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- 1996 United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
  - Annex IV (Mediterranean countries)
  - Annex V (Central and Eastern European countries)
- 1998 Draft Soil Convention, Tutzing Initiative
- 2000 IUCN World Conservation Congress Resolution on Soils
- 2005 Iceland Declaration on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Global Soil Resources
- 2006 Proposal by ISRIC of the establishment of a World Soil Council
Effective soil protection policies: US Soil Conservation Act

Erosion on Cropland, 1982-2001

- 1982: Total = 3.1
  - Sheet & Rill Erosion = 1.7
  - Wind Erosion = 1.4
- 1987: Total = 2.8
  - Sheet & Rill Erosion = 1.5
  - Wind Erosion = 1.3
- 1992: Total = 2.1
  - Sheet & Rill Erosion = 1.2
  - Wind Erosion = 0.9
- 1997: Total = 1.8
  - Sheet & Rill Erosion = 1.0
  - Wind Erosion = 0.8
- 2001: Total = 1.8
  - Sheet & Rill Erosion = 1.0
  - Wind Erosion = 0.8
What did we achieve in 50 years?

- **Erosion**
  - 115 million ha affected by water erosion
  - 42 million ha affected by wind erosion
- **Organic matter decline**
  - 45% of soils of Europe have less than 2% organic carbon
- **Compaction**
  - 36% of soils have high susceptibility to subsoil compaction
- **Salinisation**
  - 3.8 million ha affected
- **Landslides**
- **Sealing**
  - 9% of soil are covered by impermeable layers
- **Biodiversity decline**
- **Contamination**
  - 3.5 million sites may be potentially contaminated
Thank you for your attention!