

## RESPUESTAS DE LOS MINISTROS DE LA UE A LA INICIATIVA DE LA ESSC →

El Prof. Dr. Carmelo Dazzi de la Università degli Studi di Palermo y presidente de la European Society for Soil Conservation, tuvo la iniciativa de promover que las Sociedades europeas de la especialidad apoyasen una carta a los ministros del ámbito de los países de la Unión Europea.

En enero de 2015 se han empezado a recibir respuestas

### Desde el Reino Unido →

El Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) expone su posición:

*Dear Carmelo Dazzi,*

*Thank you for your email of 10 December about soil protection. I have been asked to reply and am sorry there has been a delay in doing so.*

*We agree that there must be effective and positive action with regard to soils and the UK fully supports the EU objective of protecting Europe's soils, a vital natural resource. However, we want to avoid additional regulatory burdens and disproportionate costs on Member States, farmers and businesses at a time when we are seeking to simplify legislation and encourage growth.*

*In the UK, we are already taking steps to protect and enhance our soils. We have made a commitment to ensure that, by 2030, all soils are managed sustainably and degradation threats tackled successfully in order to improve the quality of soils and to safeguard their ability to provide essential ecosystem services and functions for future generations.*

*We are already taking significant action to deliver this ambition, including through Environmental Stewardship and through the cross-compliance conditions that claimants of direct payments have to meet under the Common Agricultural Policy. This is an important European policy which seeks to protect our agricultural soils.*

*Defra is currently undertaking a significant research programme (with a total value of £3.2 million) to explore how soil degradation can affect the soil's ability to support vital ecosystem services such as flood mitigation, carbon storage and nutrient cycling and how to best manage our lowland peatlands in a way which supports efforts to tackle climate change. We will use the results of this research to set the direction of future action. We have also been working closely with the Research Councils (BBSRC and NERC) to establish new research programmes on soil sustainability. Defra has also made a commitment to reduce the use of horticultural peat through a voluntary partnership to zero by 2030.*

*The UK looks forward to working with the European Commission, Member States and other interested organisations on a suitable approach to soils, particularly on the exploration of non-regulatory options such as dissemination of best practice, use of guidelines and market-based measures.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*Charlie Coombs  
Customer Contact Unit  
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)*

## Desde la República Checa →

Neoficiální překlad

Dear Mr. Dazzi,

The Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic (MoA) is fully aware of the significance of the Commission's (EC) Soil Conservation Thematic Strategy, which is nowadays the only adopted document of the Community Acquis in the field of agricultural area/land conservation, respectively soil/land conservation as a whole. It is also important that Soil Conservation Framework Directive should be adopted following the Strategy. However, this Directive has not been adopted so far in spite of the fact that its preparation made significant advances, also during the Czech Presidency to the Council in 2009.

The MoA has been attempting to deal with the main objectives of the Strategy, i.e. preventing further soil degradation and maintaining its functions and renewal of degraded soil. MoA realizes the fact that soil degradation has a direct impact and relation on food security and also on other components of the environment.

The Soil Conservation Thematic Strategy envisages determination of specific risk areas on the territory of Europe, where there is erosion, organic matter decline, compaction, salinisation, landslides and contamination, i.e. such areas where the following is expected: conducting inventory of contaminated sites, developing of plans of corrective measures on contaminated sites and their implementation.

The Czech Republic has detailed data on soils available, thanks to the implementation of several thoroughly detailed soil surveys. The MoA is aware that in order to maintain high quality and usefulness of the data, it is essential to update them on a regular basis. This is the reason why the professional organization the Research Institute for Soil and Water Conservation, p.r.i. (RISWC) carries out a thorough and systematic update of Evaluated Soil Ecological Unit (ESEU) based on requests of the owners and land users.

The MoA in cooperation with RISWC provides access to complex information on the status of agricultural land in the Czech Republic on different levels, so that information can be effectively used. (e.g. <http://statistiky.vumop.cz>). Furthermore, the agricultural land erosion has been monitored on the territory of the Czech Republic for several years. Resulting events are reported to authorized persons of the State Land Office, who, in cooperation with the RISWC, record these events into web application available at <http://me.vumop.cz>. Individual events are described in detail (scope of the event, causes of origin, extent of damage etc.) and subsequently analyzed. Outputs from the analysis of monitored events form a quality basis for predicting erosion risk scenarios, for identifying effective preventive measures ensuring conservation of land, protection of inhabitants and property and for preparing new policies in the field of soil conservation. As of January 2015, a total of 494 events were recorded in the database Monitoring of Erosion, out of which 123 events were repetitive. The aim is to develop and improve further the current system. Standards of Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC) are also continuously updated based on the above described Monitoring of agricultural land erosion, which ensure farming in compliance with environmental protection.

Detailed data on burdening agricultural land (soils) by risk components and persistent organic pollutants are at the disposal of the Central Inspection and Testing Agricultural Institute (Register of contaminated sites) and at the RISWC (Monitoring of soil and feed burdening), which has been dealing with the issue of agricultural land contamination in the long term. Both of these organizations have been actively involved in drafting legal standards on

agricultural land fund protection against contamination. It can be stated that the amount of data on agricultural land contamination improved also at the international level.

Currently, an amendment to Act No.334/1992 Coll., on protection of agricultural land fund as amended (hereinafter the Act) has been under way, which is the fulfilment of the objectives set by Thematic Strategy. It includes:

- Newly set a system of risk substances evaluation and of elements/components causing pollution of agricultural land.
- New obligations to protect the soil from erosion by establishing the extent of erosion hazard.
- Specifying criteria for withdrawal of land for non-agricultural purposes.
- Establishing regulation of data collection regarding the information on soil quality.

If the Soil Conservation Framework Directive was adopted, based on the Thematic Strategy, transposition of such a directive should not be problematic for the Czech Republic. Most obligations and measures (on agricultural land) would be already included in Act No. 334/1992 Coll., on Conservation of Agricultural Land Fund.

Soil Conservation Thematic Strategy states that provisions concerning soil conservation are scattered into many areas and they do not represent a coherent soil conservation policy. Act No. 334/1992 Coll., is a legal rule which provides a coherent framework for soil conservation accentuated by Thematic Strategy. This Act aims to protect agricultural land from both the qualitative point of view (i.e. protection against erosion risks and pollution) and the quantitative point of view (i.e. building plans).

With kind regards,