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MEPs approve dirty deal on soil protection directive

Environmental protection

The EP Environment Committee (ENVI) today voted to further weaken a proposed directive on soil protection in the EU. After the vote, German Green **Hiltrud Breyer** said:

"The Environment Committee today voted to water down an already weak proposal from the European Commission to introduce EU legislation on soil protection. While the committee turned down an attempt by EPP members to reject the directive outright, the end result of today's vote would be a far cry from the legislation's stated goal of soil protection."

"Key articles on requirements relating to identifying and assessing contaminated sites were narrowly rescued but otherwise the text adopted today makes for grim reading for our soil. Proposals on soil remediation (aiming to repair degraded soil) were weakened, while a provision giving prospective land buyers the right to know about possible contamination was also made meaningless."

"Despite the fact the proposal leaves all target-setting and decisions on measures to tackle soil degradation to Member States and regional authorities, the Committee voted to deny the public the right to participate in these decisions or be informed about these measures. This provision would be in conflict with the Aarhus Convention, a treaty the Community has signed and ratified."

"Given the serious nature of soil degradation across Europe, EU legislation to tackle the problem is essential. In addition, differing requirements in Member States on polluted sites would lead to a distortion of competition between companies in Europe. Soil quality also affects greenhouse gas absorption or release from land."

Further information:

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