



Council of the
European Union

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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council

On: 11 December 2023

To: Delegations

No. prev. doc.: 15945/23

Subject: Special Report No 19/2023 from the European Court of Auditors entitled:
“EU efforts for sustainable soil management – unambitious standards and
limited targeting”
- *Council conclusions*

Delegations will find in the annex the Council conclusions on:

European Court of Auditors special report 19/2023 entitled: “*EU efforts for sustainable soil management – unambitious standards and limited targeting*”,

approved by the Council at its 3995th meeting held on 10-11 December 2023.

Council conclusions

European Court of Auditors on its Special Report 19/2023 entitled:

“EU efforts for sustainable soil management: Unambitious standards and limited targeting”

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

1. NOTES the Court's Special Report No 19/2023 entitled “*EU efforts for sustainable soil management: Unambitious standards and limited targeting*”, which assesses whether the Commission and Member States made effective use of CAP 2014-2022 measures for managing agricultural soils and manure sustainably and whether the actions relevant to manure management undertaken in the implementation of the Nitrates Directive have been effective;
2. TAKES NOTE of the Court's recommendations to the Commission to review and report on the level of ambition of the standards and assess the results of their implementation, to report on the targeting of the CAP voluntary measures on the most pressing local soil problems, to limit the use of derogations and review conflicting objectives in other policy areas and to improve consolidated data at EU level, which the Commission accepts;
3. NOTES that soil preservation is gaining importance in the new CAP period 2023-2027, in particular through enhanced conditionality, new eco-schemes under the first pillar and voluntary measures under the second pillar;
4. AGREES on the importance of the full implementation of the Nitrates Directive and the achievement of its objective in all EU countries, including in the Member States having been granted justified derogations due to their specificities;
5. RECOGNISES the important contribution of the Nitrates Directive in reducing nutrient losses from agriculture and, in this context, TAKES NOTE of the Green Deal Target to reduce nutrient losses by 50% by 2030;

6. NOTES the actions taken by the Commission to address data gaps and to improve the quality of data collected and/or offered voluntarily by the Member States for the period 2020-2023 and until data collection on gross nutrient balances becomes mandatory in 2026.
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