Question for oral answer O-000023/2021
to the Commission
Rule 136
Pernille Weiss, **Maria Arena**, **Martin Hojsík**, **Manuela Ripa**, **Alexandr Vondra**, **Idoia Villanueva Ruiz**
on behalf of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

Subject: Soil protection

Soil is a non-renewable resource vital for life on the planet. Soils provide important ecosystem services, food production and are key enablers to achieving the objectives of the European Green Deal. Effective soil protection is crucial to addressing land degradation and erosion, while preserving, protecting and improving the quality of the environment, human health and natural resources. Soil protection can also strengthen the territorial, economic and social cohesion of the Union. In this context, we would welcome answers from the Commission to the following questions:

1. What are the main challenges in ensuring adequate soil protection within the EU that would benefit from a common approach, while also taking account of the private ownership of land? Could the Commission please give examples, including by explaining the grounds underpinning EU competence in this regard and any possible gaps within the EU's current legislative framework?

2. What measures does the Commission envisage in order to ensure the sustainable use of soil and its protection against key threats, including the decrease in soil biodiversity and in soils' organic matter, soil degradation and desertification? Will the Commission propose new legislation on soil protection and its sustainable use? What constituents would such a piece of legislation include? How would regional specificities be taken into account?

3. Is the Commission planning to include financial instruments and technical support as part of its proposal?

4. To what extent does the Commission consider coastal protection to form part of a cross-sectoral soil strategy?

5. What conclusions does the Commission draw from the establishment of the web platform Soil Wiki?

Submitted: 22.3.2021

Lapses: 23.6.2021