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Winds of change?

EU Peat Policy Beyond 2030

Baltic Peat Producers' Forum
24 September 2026
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AULA EUROPE – a brief introduction

Aula is a leading public affairs consultancy specialising in the energy and environment sectors, with offices in Helsinki and Brussels.

Aula is the **most experienced and active consultancy working on peat** and growing media policy in Europe.

For more than a decade, we have worked closely with the European peat industry in Brussels, building deep sector expertise and a strong network of EU decision-makers and key stakeholders.

Our goal: Bringing peat to the EU policy agenda.



Sami Tulonen
Founder and Managing Partner
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EU policy environment – competitiveness, security, and climate delivery

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EU Competitiveness

Closing Europe's productivity and innovation gap is now a top political priority.



Price of energy

High and volatile energy costs remain a major competitiveness constraint.



Trade policy and strategic autonomy

Balancing open trade with greater economic security and support for EU manufacturing.



2040 climate target and post-2030 framework

Legally binding 90% net GHG reduction by 2040. Balancing with economic aspects.

State of the European Union

– Europe's next steps

- **Competitiveness and strategic autonomy key EU priorities**, with faster permitting, less red tape, stronger investment and reduced dependence on imports.
- **Affordable, home-grown energy remains central**, with the Commission seeking to reduce exposure to imported fossil fuels and strengthen European energy independence.
- **Commitment to climate targets remains**, with greater emphasis on climate change adaptation, preparedness and climate risks.
- **Water and food security growing stronger as EU priorities**, with a new upcoming initiative on water scarcity and agricultural risk.
- **EU policy debate continues to broaden beyond emissions and biodiversity** to include food production, domestic supply, resource security and resilience.



Lobbying in the EU – not good, not bad, but necessary

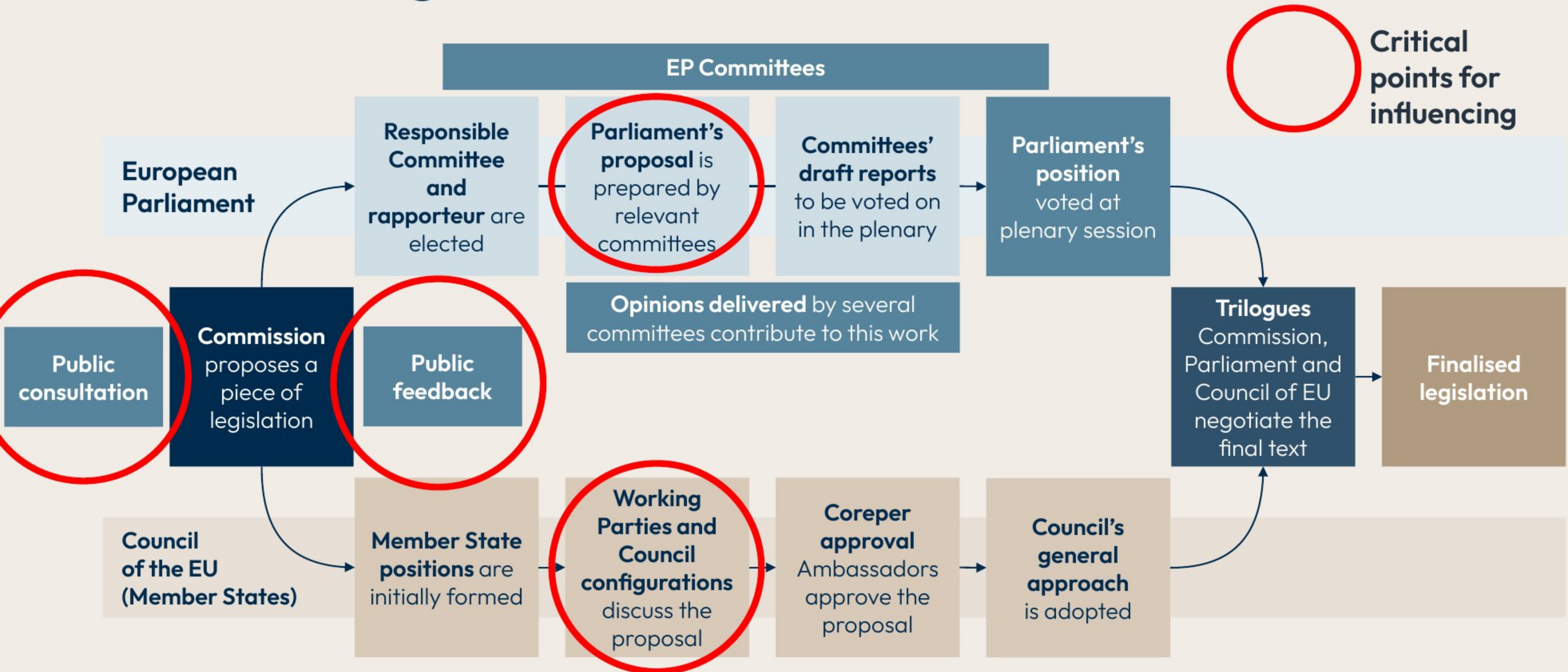
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The peat industry needs a stronger voice in Brussels

- **EU-level decisions set the direction for national policy.** Climate, nature and land-use targets agreed in Brussels are translated into **national targets, plans, funding priorities and implementation measures.**
- **Early engagement matters:** Influence is greatest while rules and methodologies are still being designed.
- **A sector that is not present risks having its story told by others.**
- Best results requires **both Brussels advocacy and coordinated national engagement.**

Not so straightforward in Brussels... 😊

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Challenges for the peat industry in Brussels

Peat starts from a difficult position: Crucial EU climate and environment policy focuses first on reducing emissions and increasing restoration.

Policy is made in silos: Climate and nature targets clash with wider goals of strategic autonomy, resource efficiency and security of supply.

Peat's value is often taken for granted: Users are spread across Europe, while production is concentrated in the Baltics and Nordics.

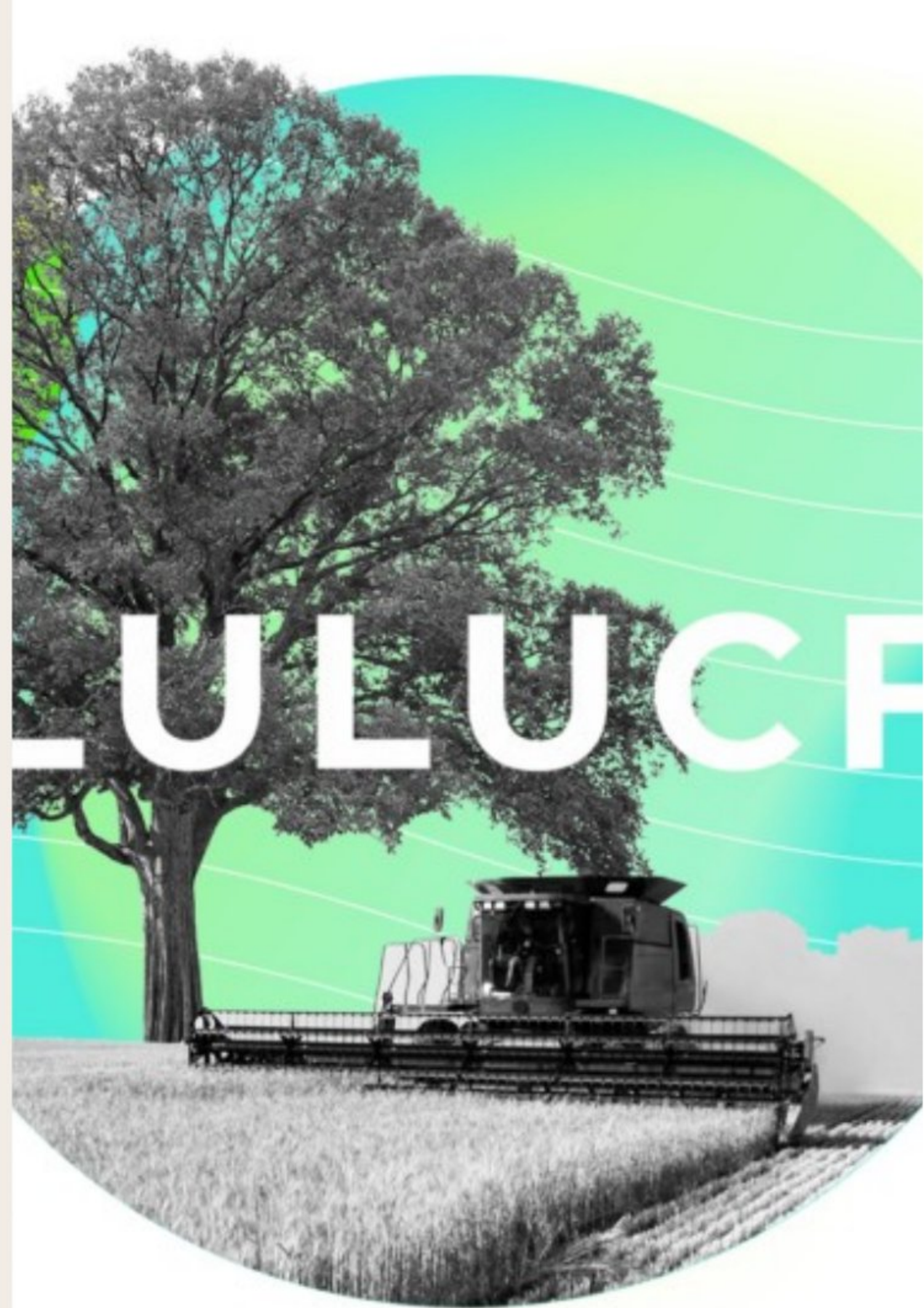
Peat needs political champions: Without active support from Member States, MEPs and industry, peat is not represented in the EU agenda.



Key EU policies – LULUCF Regulation state of play

Background: Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF)

- **LULUCF sets binding national targets to increase carbon removals and reduce emissions** from the land sector, covering forests, cropland, grassland and wetlands. The EU's 2030 objective is a net LULUCF sink of 310 million tonnes of CO₂e.
- **The second LULUCF compliance period started in 2026.** All managed land is covered. Each Member State has a binding 2030 target and a trajectory for 2026–2029.
- **Commission compliance check in 2027:** The Commission will assess Member States' final 2021–2025 LULUCF performance. Any remaining shortfalls may increase attention on additional land-use emission reductions, including from organic soils.

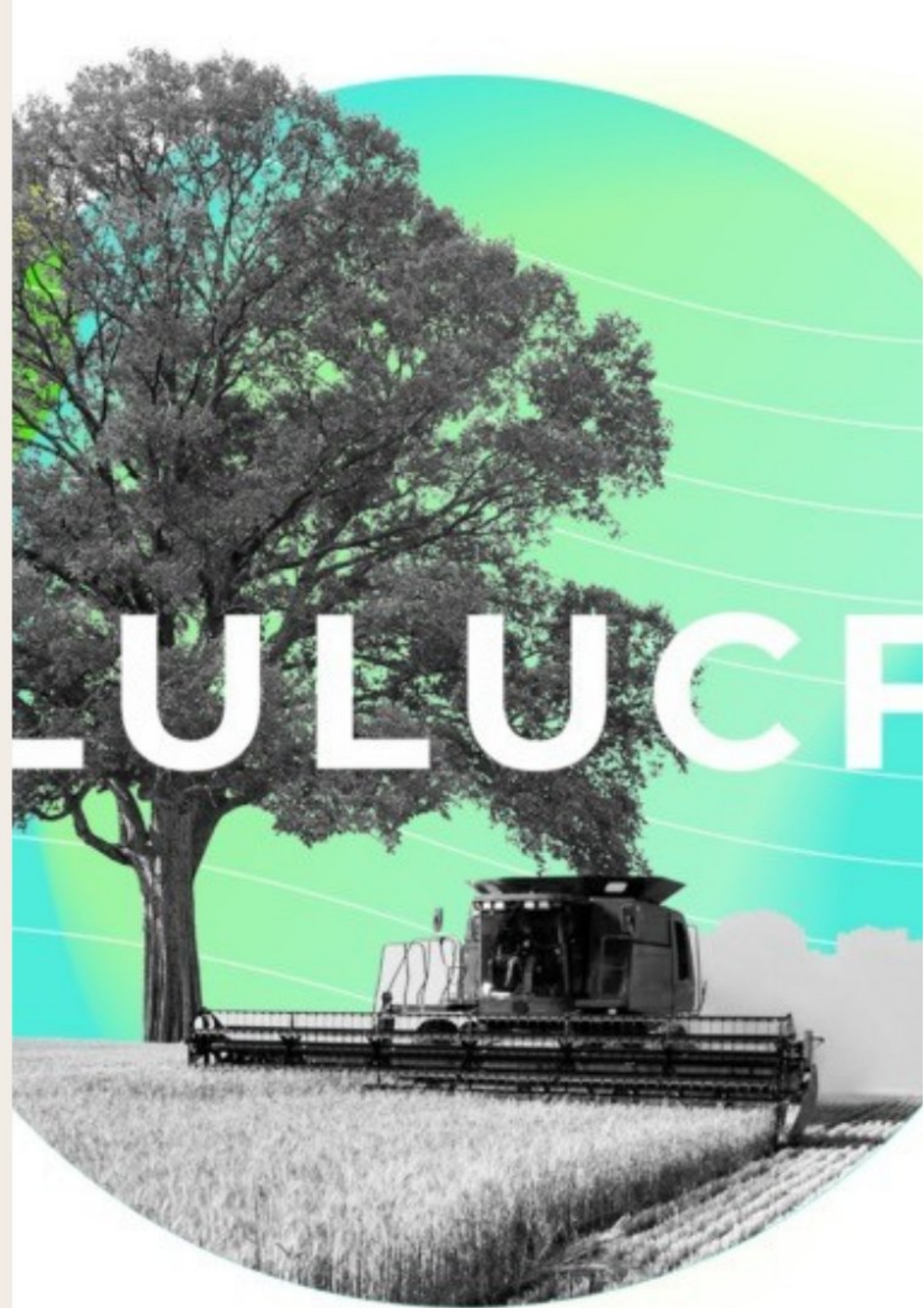


LULUCF after 2030 – pressure remains, but with added flexibilities

- **EU's binding –90% net GHG target by 2040** requires a new climate framework after current national LULUCF targets expire in 2030.
- **What should be the contribution of forests, peatlands, and agricultural soils** in land sector emission reductions and **how should emissions and removals be accounted?**
- **Debate shift in the EU** from “how large should the sink be?” to “**what is a realistic land-sector contribution, who delivers it, and at what cost?**”
- **Especially declining and volatile forest sinks have exposed weaknesses** in earlier projections. Land removals remain below the trajectory needed for 2030, with a projected EU gap of around 50 million tonnes of CO₂e.
- **Member States may increasingly look at peat harvesting**, drained organic soils and peat use as areas where further emission reductions could contribute to LULUCF targets.

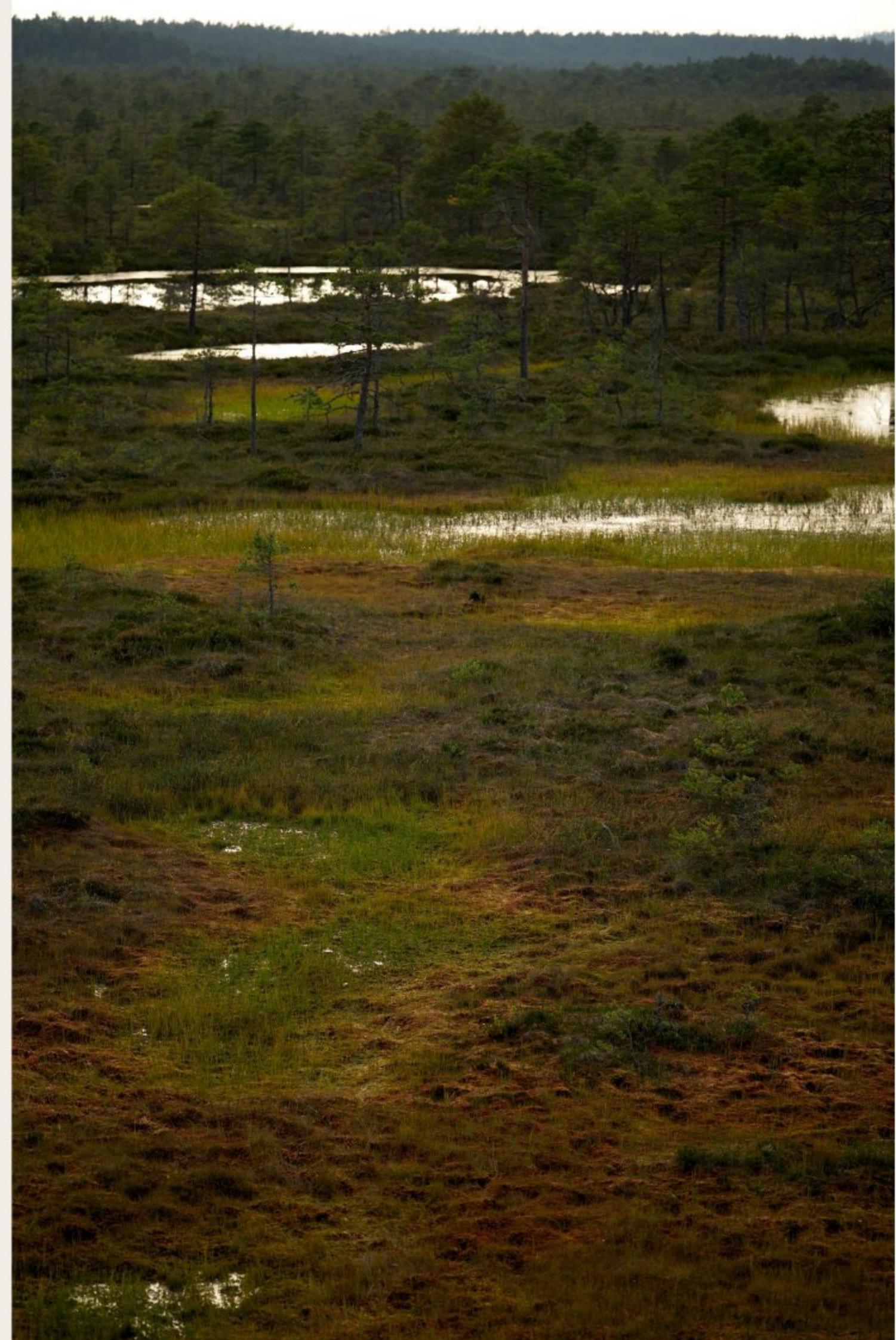
LULUCF after 2030 – new framework for land sector climate action

- **Commission to propose new national post-2030 climate targets in Q4 2026:** The review will assess the scope, design and allocation of national targets for GHG reductions and removals.
- **Commission will assess how targets should reflect different national circumstances and cost-efficiency**, and whether greater flexibility can help Member States meet them.
- **Peat industry and peat producing Member States should engage** on accounting rules and baselines, treatment of peat extraction and restoration, recognition of national circumstances, and flexibility mechanisms.
- These choices could determine how strongly peat-related emissions and restoration contribute to national targets after 2030.



Nature Restoration Regulation – focus shifts to Member States

- Restoration measures **must cover at least 20% of EU land and sea areas by 2030**, and all ecosystems in need of restoration by 2050.
- At least **30% of drained agricultural peatlands by 2030, 40% by 2040 and 50% by 2050** must be under restoration measures, with minimum rewetting requirements.
- **Restoration and rewetting of peat extraction sites** can count towards Member States' agricultural peatland targets.
- **Member States have flexibility** to reflect ecological, geographical and socio-economic conditions in implementation.
- **The EU sets the targets, but Member States decide where and how restoration is delivered.**



Nature Restoration Regulation – active implementation phase 2026–2027

- Draft **National Restoration Plans** were due on **1 September 2026**, setting out how Member States intend to meet the 2030 targets and looking ahead to 2040 and 2050.
- The Commission now has **six months to assess each draft and can issue observations** on whether the plans are sufficient to meet the set targets.
- Member States then have **six months to finalise and submit their plans**, taking the Commission's observations into account.
- **National choices on peatlands, rewetting, restoration and funding will shape the impact on the sector**, making industry engagement essential.



Our upcoming work in Brussels

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Increasing cooperation and coordination in the producing countries.

Possibility for a common Baltic-Nordic agenda.



Activating Members of the European Parliament, bringing peat to the agenda.

Raising support in political groups.



Delivering peat industry's voice to the Commission, influencing legislative proposals.



Alliance building, activating user countries, retail, grower organisations.

What is needed for quality debate and efficient advocacy

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- 1) **Stronger scientific evidence and sector data** on peat use, emissions, restoration, alternatives and impacts on horticultural productivity.
- 2) **Clearer political and practical understanding** of where peat is used, in what volumes, and what limited availability would mean in practice.
- 3) **A stronger counterweight in the policy debate** so NGO campaigns are met with credible facts, economic evidence and political engagement.
- 4) **More engagement from peat users and customers**, especially growers, retailers and the wider horticultural value chain, who often take peat availability for granted.
- 5) **Greater public and media visibility for horticultural peat**, which is still often overshadowed by the past debate on energy peat.



Thank you!

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