
Political situation in the EU – peat industry viewpoints

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Political tensions rising –
towards the 2024 EU elections



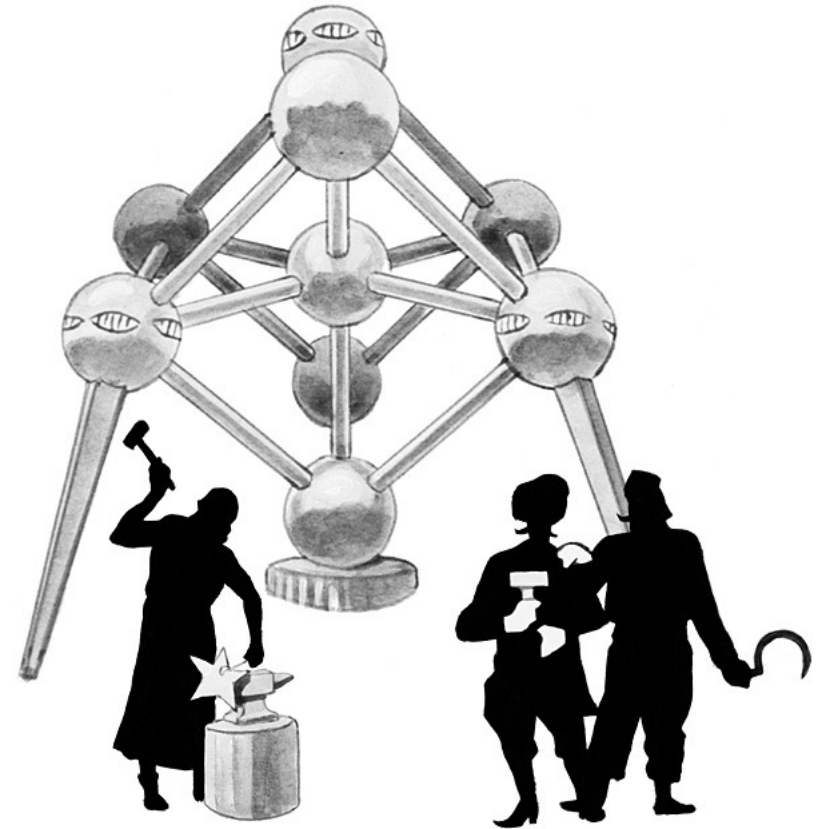
The EU Commission for 2024–2029 – dogmatism vs. pragmatism

- The current Commission's ambitious Green Deal is largely adopted, but has faced an increasing amount of criticism towards the end of the Commission's term.
 - Battle over the EU's Nature Restoration Law (most notably opposed by the EPP and the EU's agricultural sector) increased confrontations between the different EU institutions.
 - Similarly, some Member States, including France, have called for the EU to focus on implementing the already adopted green legislation and stop introducing new ambitious targets.
- The EU will introduce new legislation in 2023–2024 affecting food production and the use of peat. Ongoing crises & shortcomings of the Green Deal will affect the scope of the regulation.
 - Russia's continued aggression in Ukraine → increased concerns over global food security.
 - Difficulties in combining the EU's green goals with agricultural practices → overlooking regional specificities & realities of production.
 - Summer heat waves & drought → benefits and strengths of greenhouse growing and of horticultural peat as a growing media raw material.

Political landscape in the European Union

- EU elections will take place in June 2024. The current European Parliament will stop its legislative work during April-May to concentrate on campaigning.
 - The centre-right European People's Party is leading the polls, although its lead has diminished.
 - The more right-of-centre European Conservatives and Reformists Group (ECR) are currently set to gain the most new seats. The Greens are projected to be the biggest losers.
 - The upcoming Parliament will be more fragmented and gaining a large majority for ambitious policies could become more difficult. On the upside this might lead to more realistic and local decision making.
- Multiple noteworthy elections in EU Member States.
 - Spain; undecided elections, win for the centre-right PP, but difficulties in forming a majority government.
 - The Netherlands; elections in November, tight race between a coalition formed by the GreenLeft and the left-of-centre Labour Party and the conservative-liberal People's Party for Freedom and Democracy.
 - Elections also upcoming in Slovakia, Poland, and Germany (regional).

What has been achieved so far –
work of the Peat Alliance



Notable progress – spreading awareness & battling misconceptions

- **Sustainable Finance Taxonomy**

- Platform on Sustainable Finance’s anti-peat recommendations (use of horticultural peat as causing significant harm) not included in the Commission’s official recommendations published in June.
- Original proposal would have had major negative consequences for the sector’s financing and would have negatively influenced all upcoming EU legislation.

- **Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry Regulation (LULUCF)**

- Gathering support among MEPs to reject the anti-peat proposals made by the file’s rapporteur (banning the use of peat in horticulture & peat extraction in the EU).

- **Nature Restoration Law**

- The European Parliament discarded the mandatory rewetting/restoration targets for peatlands under agricultural use. Spreading awareness on the peat industry’s expertise on restoration.
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Notable progress – spreading awareness & battling misconceptions

- **Ensuring Food Security and Long-Term Resilience of the EU Agriculture**
 - Gathering a coalition of MEPs to acknowledge the role of growing media in ensuring EU's food system resilience and for efficient and sustainable growing practises.
 - In the adopted report, the European Parliament calls the EU Commission to 'guarantee the EU production and supply of these [growing media] materials'.
- Initiating multiple written questions to the Commission together with MEPs from different political groups & Member States, emphasising the importance of horticultural peat and presenting a realistic picture of the EU's growing media markets.

Future policy developments –
towards a more supportive
regulatory framework



EU after the Fit for 55-package

- EU institutions are currently working hard to complete the policies set in the European Green Deal, to achieve a 55% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.
- Important to remain active and offer scientific data & realistic solutions regarding the use and production of peat.
 - The level of knowledge in the EU institutions regarding horticultural peat & growing media has been low and this has been taken advantage of by few influential anti-peat NGOs and Member States.
- A new legislative cycle (2024–2029) in the EU offers the peat industry a possibility to make sure that future policies are based on facts and the important role of horticultural peat is taken into account.

Examples of notable ongoing EU policies

Q3
2023

Q4
2023

Q1
2024

Q2
2024

Sustainable EU Food Systems (upcoming) – setting minimum standards for the entire food-chain

Nature Restoration Law – ongoing trilogue negotiations, ensuring national flexibilities & promoting industry expertise


Animal Welfare Regulation (upcoming) – opportunity to highlight the use & benefits of peat in animal husbandry

Sustainable Finance Taxonomy – Commission is drafting the rules for peat extraction & the use of peat in agriculture. Final recommendations expected in 2024

Drafting the next Commission's Work Programme – legislative priorities for 2024-2029

Summary – key takeaways & next steps

- **EU policies affecting the production and use of horticultural peat will increase, especially in the field of agriculture & food production.**
 - **Important to further activate like minded stakeholders and decision makers both on the national and EU level.**
 - **2024 will be a crucially important year in setting the tone for the next Commission's term and for making sure that future policies are realistic & based on up-to-date information.**
 - **More scientific data is needed to be offered to EU legislators and to battle the simplifications of the anti-peat actors.**
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Thank you!



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