



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,
MARE.A.2/BVT

Subject: AAC Position on the ICES Evaluation of the national eel management plans progress reports

Dear Mr. Thomsen,

Thank you for the “*AAC Position on the ICES Evaluation of the national eel management plans progress reports*”.

Firstly, I would like to refer you to my letter of 13th June 2022 to all the chairs of the Advisory Councils (ACs) with reference Ares (2022)4342597 and reiterate that the situation of the European eel has been critical for a long time and its management and conservation is a complex multi-faceted issue.

More specifically, your recommendations on how to improve the situation of the species and those depending on the stock (fishers and eel farmers) are also of importance to the Member States’ competent authorities. Ultimately, the Member States are responsible for implementing relevant laws, conservation measures and actions they have committed to, and the Commission services are monitoring the implementation. Indeed, the progress by Member States has not been sufficient in helping the eel to recover as confirmed by ICES and Commission evaluation of the Eel Regulation No 1100/2007.

Furthermore, I would like to inform you that the Commission adopted on 28th October 2022 the “*Proposal for a Council Regulation fixing for 2023 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks, applicable in Union waters and, for Union fishing vessels, in certain non-Union waters, as well as fixing for 2023 and 2024 such fishing opportunities for certain deep-sea fish stocks*” (COM/2022/559)¹. Please note that it includes an article on eel, notably “*...based on the stakeholder consultation and the ICES advice of 4 November 2021, the Commission proposes for 2023 to extend the closure for any eel fishing activity from three to six consecutive months in marine and adjacent brackish*

(¹) https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/fisheries/rules/fishing-quotas/tacs-and-quotas-2023_en

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waters in the north-east Atlantic (which includes the Baltic Sea) and in the Mediterranean (but excluding the Black Sea). This proposal may be updated after the publication of the scientific advice by ICES for 2023". This proposal will be negotiated in the AGRIFISH Council in December.

The Members of the AAC may also be aware that the most recent ICES advice of 3 November 2022 ⁽²⁾ reiterates the zero catch of eels for 2023 in all habitats. Following the ecosystem-based management considerations, ICES also advised that all non-fisheries related anthropogenic mortalities should be brought to zero and that the quantity and quality of eel habitats should be restored. I appreciate the time and effort you put into preparing your recommendations and look forward to our continued fruitful cooperation.

Should you have any further questions on this reply, please contact Ms Pascale COLSON, coordinator of the Advisory Councils (Pascale.COLSON@ec.europa.eu; +32.2.295.62.73), who will forward them to relevant colleagues.

Yours sincerely,

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⁽²⁾ The latest ICES advice on European eel available online:

https://ices-library.figshare.com/articles/report/European_eel_Anguilla_anguilla_throughout_its_natural_range/19772374