

The newly-adopted “EEL REGULATION”

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INDICANG Colloque Final – 19 & 20 June 2007

History: Commission efforts towards the recovery of the European Eel stock

- 2003 - Commission presented Action Plan for management of European Eel (COM 2003, 573)
- Oct 2005 – Proposal for a *Council Regulation establishing measures for the recovery of the stock of European eel* - COM(2005)472 final.
- April 2006 – EP proposed amendments;
- May 2006 – COM responded with amended proposal.
- 2006-2007: Intensive, in-depth discussions
- 11 June 2007 – **Adoption of the Regulation!**

Geographical Scope

Areas Covered:
Community
maritime waters
and inland waters
of Member States
that flow into ICES
areas III, IV, VI,
VII, VIII, IX and
the
Mediterranean.



The core of the proposal:

Tailor-made management plans

- The characteristics of river basins vary enormously:
 - Ecology
 - Biochemistry
 - Human activity (fishing, h/e power stations, dams, pollution etc.)
- Therefore each MS is asked to submit a separate **Eel Management Plan (EMP)** for each eel river basin (or one covering its entire territory).
- MS must designate “eel river basins” – natural eel habitat.

Tailor-made management plans - 2

- Goal of EMP: 40% of silver eel biomass must be allowed to escape to the sea (or downstream)
- Long-term objective – at least 2-3 eel generations
- Failure to submit an adequate EMP on time → 50% reduction in fishing effort.

Tailor-made management plans - 3

- EMP's may contain, but aren't limited to:
 - fishing effort reduction (commercial and recreational)
 - restocking measures
 - structural measures / river continuity
 - combating predators
- Plans must include non-fishery measures unless these aren't necessary to attain 40% esc. target
- EMP's must indicate timescale for reaching the target and measures to be taken in the 1st year of application.
- EMP's shall be approved by STECF.

Tailor-made management plans - 4

- MS sharing a river basin are to jointly prepare plans (also with 3rd countries).
- 60% of eel <12cm long are to be used in restocking, aiming to increase escapement of silver eel to the sea. (Start at 35%, reach 60% by 2013).
- EMP's will be subject to modification / improvement in view of new scientific info/data and changes in stock status.

Maritime Waters

- Catches are to be reduced by 50% relative to average catch of 2004-2006.
- Reduction to be achieved gradually over 5 years from entry into force.

Reporting and Evaluation

- MS must report to the COM every 3 years (then every 6) on:
 - The % of biomass of silver eel escaping to the sea
 - The level of fishing effort and reductions thereof
 - The mortality caused by non-fisheries factors and the reductions thereof
 - The amount of glass eel caught and the % of these used for different purposes (consumption, aquaculture, restocking etc.)
- The COM will report (after 4-5 years) to EP and Council on the outcome of the implementation of EMP's, up to that date.

Control and Enforcement

- In Community Maritime Waters: Reg. 2371/2002 (on conservation and sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources under the CFP) applies.
- In Inland Waters: MS may establish their own control system, adapted to their situation and legal framework already in place.
- MS will establish lists of:
 - Vessels flying their flag, fishing for eel in Community maritime waters
 - Authorizations or licenses to fish for eel in inland waters

Statements released by the Commission at the Council of Ministers on June 11 & 12

- Statement 1: The 40% objective is calculated as an average for all the waters of a Member State.
- Statement 2: The Commission will propose restrictions on international trade in European eel, while fully respecting the EC's obligations to the WTO.
- In addition, the Commission supports the proposal to include eel in CITES Annex II.
- Statement 3: If the price paid by restockers falls to 20% lower than the international market price, the obligations to reserve a certain % for restocking will be temporarily lowered.

What happens next?

- **The Commission is preparing a standard form which Member States must follow when preparing their EMP's.**
- **This will facilitate the preparation and evaluation of the plans. A group of experts will be consulted prior to releasing the final draft.**
- **We expect some EMP's to arrive soon!**
- **Finally, I will be very, very busy for the next 2 years or so...**