



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,
MARE/C1/JS/MK/dsb/Ares(2021)

Dear Chairs,

I am reaching out to you as chairs of the Advisory Council in your area of work in relation to the ICES advice of 4 November 2021 for the entire natural range of European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*)¹. ICES advises that there should be zero catches in all habitats in 2022, when the precautionary approach is applied. This applies to both recreational and commercial catches and includes catches of glass eels for restocking and aquaculture. All other anthropogenic mortalities should be minimized and eliminated where possible.

European eel stock remains in a critical condition and ICES has issued more clear advice than in previous years that impacts on various sectors, including the fisheries and aquaculture.

The European Commission is therefore seeking the advice of your members as to how best to implement this ICES advice. We believe that the regional understanding of the problem and the necessary measures for the stock recovery is key. Your recommendation should also contain concrete suggestions for both commercial and recreational fisheries, aquaculture as well as any other recommendation for inland waters and the aquaculture activities. Such recommendations can cover any measure you would deem useful to implement the advice. I would appreciate if you could provide your written recommendations and other input to my services no later than 4 April 2022.

I would like to take this opportunity to underscore our concerns, for both the status of the eel stock, and the future of the fisheries and aquaculture that rely upon it. Let me also recall that the ultimate goal of actions is to recover the eel stock across its natural range and ensure sustainable fishing in the long term, and this is even more important in the

¹ ICES advice: <https://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Advice/2021/2021/ele.2737.nea.pdf>

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wider context of the European Green Deal. The evaluation of the Eel Regulation² has confirmed that more efforts and further ambition are needed to help the eel recover. Given that the conservation and management of eels is a wide-ranging issue, it needs to take into account both fisheries and environmental considerations.

The recommendations from the Advisory Councils have proven crucial in light of the technical details of fisheries management. We appreciate that this will be a considerable body of work for your members and so I would like to thank you, your members and your secretariats in advance for the valuable input.

I am looking 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,

Charlina VITCHEVA

² https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/1696-Evaluation-of-the-Eel-Regulation_en