



Explanatory meetings of the EU acquis – Chapter 13

# **Eel Regulation and additional EU actions for recovery of eels**

**European Commission, DG MARE**

*These slides accompany the explanation of the acquis to Albania and North Macedonia and can only be used for that purpose. Their content is subject to further development of the acquis and interpretation by the Court of Justice of the European Union*

# European eel stock

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- **Single stock, migratory (marine, brackish, fresh waters), long life span (5-20 years), spawning in Sargasso Sea**
- **Stock and recruitment low at an all-time (recruitment 1-5% of pre-1980 levels)**
- **Exploitation currently unsustainable**
- **Illegal Unregulated Unreported (IUU) fishing is a serious issue → illegal export mainly to Asia**
- **IUCN Red List: Critically endangered (2008) → next step: Extinction**

# Legal framework

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## **1. European Union**

- Council Regulation 1100/2007 (Eel Regulation)
- No export and import since 2009
- Intra-EU trade allowed
- TAC and quotas Regulation 2019 → covers all EU waters, 3 month eel fishing closure period at all eel stages and all activities exploiting eel

## **2. International**

- CITES Appendix II (since 2009) → trade restrictions
- CMS Appendix II (since 2014) → international cooperation
- GFCM Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/1

# Eel Regulation (I)

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- *For the recovery of the stock of European eel*
- *Applies at sea, in transitional and fresh waters*

## Requirements for the EU Member States

- **Establishing Eel Management Plans (EMPs)**
- **Achieving 40% escapement of silver eel (compared to pristine)**
- **Reserving 60% of glass eel catches for restocking**
- **Reducing 50% effort or catches in EU marine waters**

# Eel Regulation (II)

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## Content of the Eel Management Plans

- Fishing effort reduction (commercial and recreational)
- Reducing catches in EU marine waters
- Restocking measures
- Restoring river continuity (hydropower turbines and dams)
- Combatting predators
- Measures relating to aquaculture
- Implementing other measures to achieve the objectives

# Eel Regulation (III)

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## Reporting obligations

- By MS every 3<sup>rd</sup> year until 2018, then every 6<sup>th</sup> year
- % of biomass of silver eel escaping to the sea
- Level of fishing effort and % effort
- Mortality caused by non-fisheries factors and % reduction
- Glass eel catches and % used for consumption, aquaculture, restocking

## Evaluation/Revision

- EMPs may be revised in line with new scientific information
- Eel Regulation currently evaluated

# GFCM activities

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## Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/1

- Establishes **multi-annual management plan for catching European eels in the Mediterranean Sea**
- Includes targeted, incidental and recreational catches, as well as taking into account in their management measures “other anthropogenic mortalities factors in order to reduce their impact on eels and increase their probability of the escapement to the sea, as well as including restocking or translocation practices.

## Research programme

- Will be launched in 2019 to provide a comprehensive state of play of the status of the stock in the Mediterranean

# Additional EU actions for the recovery of eels

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- *Annual ICES advice on the state of the stock and ad hoc requests to the Commission*
- *Recent actions to reinforce the protection of eels:*
  - ✓ **three-month closure of eel fisheries at EU level**
  - ✓ **political commitment from COM and MS to improve the implementation of the Eel Regulation at 2017 December Council ('Declaration on eels')**
  - ✓ **formal evaluation of the Eel Regulation to inform whether Regulation needs to be reviewed and/or the implementation needs to be improved**
- *Work with international partners: EU liaising with the Russian Federation (Joint Baltic Sea Fisheries Committee), EU and 3<sup>rd</sup> countries under GFCM*





**Thank you for  
your attention**