

Press Invitation

May 31, 2016 – eel conference London

Andrew Kerr, chairman of Sustainable Eel Group, calls out to European government to keep track on fish caught within the European quota:

“The illegal Trafficking of Eels to Asia is Europe’s own Ivory Trade”

The Sustainable Eel Group (SEG) has made an extensive study into the last 6 months of trade in glass eels and has identified a vast gap between the legitimate sales within Europe and what has been declared caught.

The illegal traffic of glass eels is one of the main topics at the international eel conference, taking place at Fishmongers Hall, May 31 in London. Key note speakers:

- Ricardo Serrao Santos, MEP for the Azores and Commissioner for the Sargasso Sea Commission.
- Eel scientist Doctor Willem Dekker will present international steering models for governing of the eel across Europe.
- Alex Koelewijn, chairman of the SEG-industry board will reveal how the European industry is working toward fully transparency.

At the conference a declaration will be made by Ricardo Serrao Santos, MEP for the Azores and Commissioner for the Sargasso Sea Commission with Andrew Kerr, Chairman of the Sustainable Eel Group. Both speakers are calling upon the legally responsible authorities (all national authorities and the European Commission) to implement an airtight control methodology for the tracking and tracing of all fish caught within the official quota, in order to increase the effectiveness of Europe’s own eel management plan.

Backgrounder Illegal trafficking:

In the season 2015/2016 the number of 214 million glass eels was recorded as landed and the total legal traceable sales of 98 million glass eels have been identified. The gap amounts to 115 million glass eels worth \$50m. These fish are flown to Asia, notably to China.

European eel is listed on Annex II of CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species). International trade of European eel into and out of the EU is prohibited.

The enforcement authorities, especially in Spain and France, have been very active in trying to halt this trade and have carried out extensive overt and covert operations. There have been seizures of glass eels in transit and traffickers have been arrested. However, this is unlikely to have a lasting impact with such an ingrained tradition and with such huge prices being paid (\$1500 a kilo / 3000 glass eels).

The details of the evidence and of some investigation stories will be revealed at SEG's conference at Fishmongers Hall on Tuesday 31 May 2016.

Press information:

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Conference details

Address: Fishmongers Hall, London Bridge, EC4R 9EL

Timetable:

- Start conference 11.00 hrs (conference room opens at 10.00 hrs)
- Closure of conference: 15.00 hrs
- Press briefing: 15.30 hrs