



The EU approach to the protection of the European eel

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- *International framework for the protection of the European Eel*
- *EU measures to protect the European eel*
- *Implementation and enforcement*
- *Challenges*



The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)

- *European Eel listed in Appendix II in 2007;*
- *Listing came into force in March 2009 – CITES permits needed for international trade;*
- *Decisions adopted by CoP 17 (Johannesburg, 2016) to assess implementation of the Eel listing in Appendix II of CITES;*
- *Workshop (London, 18-20 April 2017) organised by the CITES Secretariat, with financial support from the EU;*
- *Standing Committee (Geneva, 27 November – 1 December 2017) called for strengthened cooperation between range, export, transit and import countries to fight illegal trade*
- *The Animals Committee (16-20 July 2018) will discuss outcomes of the studies and provide recommendations on how to ensure the sustainable trade in Anguilla species,*
- *Recommendations from the Animals Committee will be presented to Parties for consideration at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (from 23 May 2019).*



The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)

- *The European Eel listed in Appendix II in 2014, calling for international cooperation to improve the conservation status of the species.*
- *A 1st workshop (Galway, Ireland, 2016) discussed ways of such cooperation.*
- *In 2017 the conference of the parties of the CMS adopted a "Concerted Action" to further explore the role of the CMS and other conventions such as CITES and regional fisheries management bodies.*
- *A 2nd workshop (Malmö, Sweden, 15-16 May, 2018) with the participation on many range states and relevant organizations*
- *Some key areas for future cooperation have been identified, including the role of the CMS in establishing a link between conservation activities in the Sargasso Sea and in Europe and North Africa (see <https://www.cms.int/en/meeting/2nd-meeting-range-states-european-eel>)*

Other relevant international fora

- *ICES (International Council for the Exploration of the Sea)*
- *GFCM (General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean) – joint EIFAAC/ICES/GFCM Working Group on Eels*
- *HELCOM (Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission)*

Protection of Eels in the EU

- ❖ *Framework regulation for the protection and sustainable use of the stock of European eel (in place since 2007)*
 - **Obligatory adoption by the Member States of eel management plans**
 - **Specific measures relating to restocking of glass eels;**
 - **Specific provisions on the reduction of fishing efforts for eels caught in marine waters;**
 - **Provisions on the control and enforcement of import and export of European eels.**
- ❖ *Wildlife Trade Regulations (Council Regulation 338/97 and its implementing regulations)*
 - **Eel listed at Annex B – international trade requires CITES import and export permits;**
 - **No export allowed since December 2010, because the scientific authorities of the EU Member States have concluded that "non-detriment finding (NDF)" for the species could not be performed.**

Achievements:

- ❖ *Adoption of management and conservation measures to improve recovery and escapement of adult eels*
- ❖ *Reduced fishing effort and catches of eels*
- ❖ *Improved river continuity to allow for migration of eels*
- ❖ *Too early to measure progress*

Risks:

- ❖ *Illegal trade*

ENFORCEMENT in the EU

- ❖ *Illegal trade in European eels is a serious concern*
 - **Shipment of glass eels to farms in Asia**
 - **Season runs from October to April**
 - **10 tonnes of European Eel are believed to have been smuggled in the 2016 - 2017 season from the EU to China, with a profit estimated at EUR 10 million**
- ❖ *Enforcement: investigations ongoing*
 - **EU Enforcement Authorities**
 - **EUROPOL**
 - **INTERPOL**
 - **during the fishing season 2016-2017, 48 persons arrested and 4 000 kg of glass eels seized, total value of approximately EUR 4 million**
- ❖ *Fighting illegal trade is a priority for the EU*
 - **EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking**

Priority 2 – making implementation and enforcement of existing rules and the fight against organised wildlife crime more effective;

Way forward

- ❖ *Further develop cooperation between export, transit and destination countries*
- ❖ *Improve reporting data*
- ❖ *Continue fighting illegal trade*

Thank you for your attention !