

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001955/24
to the Commission
Benoit Cassart (Renew), Olivier Chastel (Renew), Hilde Vautmans (Renew)
(4 October 2024)**

Subject: Socioeconomic importance of recreational fishing in inland waters

Recreational freshwater fishing presents an important source of direct and indirect income for rural communities, as well as a means of revenue diversification. The tourism surrounding this activity ensures the sustainability and good condition of fish stocks, while providing social and health benefits.

Unfortunately, there is currently no official data on the economic importance of this sector at EU level, its environmental impact or the number of full-time jobs dependent on this activity. It seems, however, that this sector generates revenues at EU level in the order of EUR 15-20 billion per year.

1. Does the Commission's Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE) intend to set up an instrument to measure the financial, social and environmental impact of recreational freshwater fishing?
2. What strategy does the Commission intend to launch in order to develop the underexploited potential of recreational fishing and freshwater angling tourism to attract visitors all year round, as a source of rural development and sustainable tourism?

Submitted: 4.10.2024

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Šefčovič on behalf of the European Commission
(19 November 2024)**

Recreational fisheries have an important role to play in coastal and rural areas. Recreational fishing on marine fisheries resources is considered in the overall Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), as they can have a significant impact on fish resources.

For marine waters, Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 ⁽¹⁾ on the CFP obliges Member States to ensure that recreational fishing is conducted in a manner that is compatible with the objectives of the CFP, namely ensuring that fishing activities are environmentally sustainable and consistent with achieving economic, social and employment benefits.

The management of fresh water recreational fishing is under Member State competence and subject to the environmental legislation and standards, such as for example those set out in the Water Framework Directive ⁽²⁾ and the newly adopted Nature Restoration Regulation ⁽³⁾.

In addition to the horizontal frameworks in place, a specific regulation exists for the management of the stock of European eel under which Member States are required to develop their national Eel Management Plans, including for recreation fishing ⁽⁴⁾.

At this stage, the Commission is not considering setting up a specific instrument to regulate recreational fishing. The Commission launched an extensive evaluation of the CFP Regulation which will look at all aspects of the regulation including recreational fishing. This evaluation will be the basis to see how the CFP has performed and is working and why it is working as it does.

It will also provide the elements to consider how its implementation can be improved and what other actions may be needed including for what concerns the contribution of the CFP to rural and coastal development.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32013R1380>
⁽²⁾ OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2000/60/2014-11-20>
⁽³⁾ OJ L, 2024/1991, 29.7.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1991/oj>
⁽⁴⁾ https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/ocean/marine-biodiversity/eel_en