

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002829/26  
to the Commission  
Bert-Jan Ruissen (ECR), Carmen Crespo Díaz (PPE)  
(8 July 2026)**

*Subject:* Expert sub-group on eel

On 15 April 2026, the Commission reported to Parliament's Committee on Fisheries that only three Member States, representing a small minority of total eel stock, had notified it regarding their updated Eel Management Plans (EMPs) under Council Regulation (EC) No 1100/2007 (the Eel Regulation). In order to improve the regulation's governance and to ensure regular updates to EMPs, Parliament has recommended the creation of an eel-specific expert group to advise the Commission on implementation, to provide feedback to Member States on their EMPs and to evaluate progress.

The joint special group set up under the marine action plan brings together fisheries and environment ministries, but lacks a specific focus on eel. Given the eel's marine and freshwater life cycle, an eel-specific subgroup would be a cost-efficient and coherent way to address all impacts on eel.

1. Will the Commission consider creating a subgroup under the joint special group that would be dedicated to improved governance of the Eel Regulation?
2. How would the Commission involve representatives from commercial and recreational fishers, water managers, hydro-power companies, civil society and other relevant parties in such a subgroup?
3. How will the Commission ensure the viability and competitiveness of the eel fisheries sector taking into consideration its socioeconomic impact?

Submitted: 8.7.2026

**Answer given by Mr Kadis on behalf of the European Commission  
(24 August 2026)**

The Commission created in 2023 the Joint Special Group under the EU Marine Action Plan<sup>(1)</sup> as a forum to exchange on matters pertaining to the implementation of this Action Plan. This also covers actions related to improving the protection of European eel.

The Joint Special Group includes representatives of the Member States' fisheries and environmental administrations, as well as observers representing various stakeholder groups, including fisheries sector, environmental non-governmental organisations, advisory councils. This Special Group last met on 30 June 2026.

Issues related to the governance and implementation of the Eel Regulation, and to the eel matters more generally, can be and are already being discussed under the existing structure of the action plan and in other fora at the EU, regional and international levels.

For instance, upon request from the Special Group, the Commission organised in April 2024 a dedicated intersessional technical workshop on eels<sup>(2)</sup>. The creation of a dedicated subgroup on eels is therefore not considered necessary.

The conservation and management of critically endangered European eel require a comprehensive approach, taking into consideration fisheries, environmental and socioeconomic impacts. Existing measures at EU level allow fishing for eels in accordance with EU law<sup>(3)</sup>.

In that respect, it should be noted that the European eel is the only fish stock with a zero-catch advice issued by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea<sup>(4)</sup> for which targeted fishing is allowed to continue.

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<sup>(1)</sup> EU Action Plan: Protecting and restoring marine ecosystems for sustainable and resilient fisheries, COM/2023/102 final, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52023DC0102>.

<sup>(2)</sup> This Workshop entitled 'Rebuilding the European eel stock and sustainability of sectors: silver eel capture and release' was attended by more than 100 participants from Member States and relevant stakeholders, including fisheries, environmental, hydropower and research communities.

<sup>(3)</sup> As referred to in recent Commission's replies to the EP questions on eels (Parliamentary question- E-2220/26 — Effectiveness of conservation measures concerning the critically endangered European Eel (*Anguilla Anguilla*); PQ E-539/26 — The Spanish Government's decision to unilaterally step up protection of the European eel).

<sup>(4)</sup> Most recent ICES advice published in November 2025: [https://ices-library.figshare.com/articles/report/European\\_eel\\_i\\_Anguilla\\_anguilla\\_i\\_throughout\\_its\\_natural\\_range/27203028?file=59290940](https://ices-library.figshare.com/articles/report/European_eel_i_Anguilla_anguilla_i_throughout_its_natural_range/27203028?file=59290940) and ICES report from the Workshop in support of this advice: [https://ices-library.figshare.com/articles/report/Joint\\_EIFAAC\\_ICES\\_GFCM\\_Working\\_Group\\_on\\_Eels\\_WGEEL\\_/30488120](https://ices-library.figshare.com/articles/report/Joint_EIFAAC_ICES_GFCM_Working_Group_on_Eels_WGEEL_/30488120).