



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

Fisheries Policy Mediterranean and Black Sea
CFP and Structural Support, Policy Development and Coordination

Brussels
MARE.D.3/KJ/

Mr Guillaume Carruel
Executive Secretary BSAC
Email: gc@bsac.dk
Mr Nils Höglund
BSAC EBM Working Group Chair

Subject: BSAC letter on Eel and Joint Special Group 6th October 2023

Dear Mr Carruel and Mr Höglund,

Thank you for your letter in subject addressed to Ms Vitcheva, Director-General of DG MARE⁽¹⁾, where you ask the Commission to i) share the revised guidance on the preparation and modification of Eel Management Plans (EMP), and ii) enquire on how the agreement on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBJN) or “High Seas Treaty”, recently signed by the EU, could help protecting eels throughout their life cycle, including during their spawning migration to and reproduction in the Sargasso Sea.

As the matters raised in your letter are of technical nature, Ms Vitcheva has asked me to reply on her behalf.

Firstly, let me thank you for your engagement in the conservation and management of European eel. The actions indeed require a holistic approach, as discussed in the first meeting of the Joint Special Group under the Marine Action Plan⁽²⁾.

Then, when it comes to the **guidance on EMPs**, we are still waiting for a few remaining Member States to submit us their feedback. The document will be finalised on the basis of the comments received and will be of use to the Member States when revising their EMPs. Once this guidance is more stable, we will also see when and how best to make it available more widely to inform stakeholders.

Concerning the question about **BBJN agreement** and the protection of the European eel in the Sargasso Sea, the EU is working towards a speedy ratification of the Agreement and is already looking at the future implementation. The possibility to establish marine protected areas in the High Seas is one of the main added values of the Agreement and the

⁽¹⁾ Your reference BSAC/2023-2024/24, our reference Ares(2023)6806883.

⁽²⁾ COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS EU Action Plan: Protecting and restoring marine ecosystems for sustainable and resilient fisheries. COM(2023)102 final

EU will look into proposals, including in the Sargasso Sea, to best protect marine biodiversity.

We look forward to our continued fruitful cooperation on this important topic. We are also glad to hear that the BSAC will continue to engage with the Member States in the framework of BALTFISH to promote coordination around the implementation of the national EMP, including actions to protect the eel throughout its lifecycle.

My colleague Katarzyna Janiak remains a contact point for technical questions concerning the revision of the guidance on EMP preparation and modification. Should you have any further questions on this reply, please contact her or Ms Julia Rubeck, our Advisory Councils coordinator, via the functional mailbox MARE-AC@ec.europa.eu.

Yours sincerely,

Valérie TANKINK
Head of Unit

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