

At its meeting in Dublin on 13 and 14 December 1996, the European Council welcomed the designs for the euro banknotes presented to it by the European Monetary Institute.

The final decisions on the matter will be taken by the European Central Bank once it has been set up in accordance with the Treaty.

(98/C 187/165)

WRITTEN QUESTION P-3994/97

by Eva Kjer Hansen (ELDR) to the Commission

(11 December 1997)

Subject: Introduction of rules on the catching and breeding of the common eel

When is a proposal to be submitted for rules on the catching and breeding of the common eel (*Anguilla anguilla*)?

Can the Commission also indicate the content of any repopulation programmes involved?

Are there any plans to introduce an export ban to stabilize the European market?

(98/C 187/166)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-4001/97

by Rijk van Dam (I-EDN) to the Commission

(14 January 1998)

Subject: Eel fisheries in Europe

A group of researchers (EC Concerted Action AIR A94-1939) recently described the size and condition of eel stocks in Europe. In their final report they conclude that the situation in Europe with regard to eels is grave. One reason for this is that the migration of elvers from the sea is declining sharply. The researchers also point out that elver fishing takes up 97% of all young eels as soon as they have reached European waters, mostly for sale to China.

1. Does the Commission share the view that the situation in Europe with regard to eels gives cause for concern?
2. Does it agree that the international character of the problem calls for coordinated measures at European level?
3. Does it share the opinion that the large scale removal of elvers to third countries is a threat to eel stocks in Europe?
4. If so, is it willing in the near future to restrict the sale of elvers to third countries and to encourage the placing of elvers in European waters?

**Joint answer
to Written Questions P-3994/97 and E-4001/97
given by Mrs Bonino on behalf of the Commission**

(30 January 1998)

The Commission is aware of the valuable and growing contribution of the eel cultivation sector to European aquaculture and of the importance of the eel fisheries in Member States. The dependence on supplies of juvenile eels caught in the wild will remain for so long as it continues to be impossible to complete the life cycle of this species in captivity. Juvenile eel is also used for stocking purposes and is important for the commercial fisheries.