

**Question for written answer E-000271/2023
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Simona Baldassarre (ID)

Subject: Problems concerning implementation of the Habitats Directive and its subsequent revisions

With a view to combating invasive 'alien species' and to conserving biodiversity, the Habitats Directive and its subsequent revisions stipulate that only native aquatic fauna – meaning species present there prior to the 16th century – may be released into fresh waters.

However, in Italy, various fishers' associations, fish farms, fishing tour operators and equipment retailers have pointed out that the implementation of the directive is bringing the freshwater fishing sector to its knees.

Indeed the catching of fish that have been present in Italian waters for more than 500 years, such as brown trout, salmon, whitefish and char, has been banned at certain sites with scant regard for businesses that rely on the presence of these species in Italian lakes, such as restaurants and recreational or amateur fishing sites. For instance, sport fishing brings around EUR 3 billion per year into the Italian state's coffers as tax revenue.

In view of the above:

1. What instruments does the Commission intend to use to safeguard businesses whose livelihoods depend on the sale of these species?
2. In line with the CFP's pillar of economic sustainability, does it think the Habitats Directive should be amended to protect the livelihoods of businesses dependent on or linked to the fisheries sector?

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