

WRITTEN QUESTION P-0281/03

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to the Commission

Subject: Reform of the common fisheries policy and restoration of wild salmon stocks

Baltic wild salmon are very important for recreational fishing and hence for tourism in the northern part of the Gulf of Bothnia and northern Finland. However, wild salmon are currently being overfished at sea and in estuaries, and they are often fished at the wrong times. As a result, salmon are being prevented from migrating to their spawning rivers, or at least their migration is being seriously disrupted.

The European Union's fisheries policy completely disregards the issue of restoring wild salmon stocks in the Baltic, although the EU's competence extends to the Member States' sea and river fishing. In the Baltic, the EU uses its authority over salmon fishing only as a member of the Baltic Sea Fishery Commission, and restrictions on fishing mainly take the form of fishing quotas for each species.

By joint ministerial decision, Sweden and Finland have restricted salmon fishing in the northern Gulf of Bothnia, particularly in the estuary of the River Tornio, but only Finland has enforced this agreement strictly. Sweden has granted exemptions to its own fishermen, more or less in accordance with the rules, and the Swedes' salmon catches from the river mouth have increased to a level which exceeds many times over the recreational catch from the whole of the River Tornio.

Does the Commission attach importance to restoring wild salmon stocks and promoting recreational fishing for wild salmon? How will the Commission take Baltic wild salmon into account in the current reform of the EU's fisheries policy?