

Report of the twenty-fourth session of the

EUROPEAN INLAND FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMISSION

Mondsee, Austria, 14–21 June 2006



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TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE
EUROPEAN INLAND FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMISSION
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PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

The present text is the final version of the report presented on 21 June 2006 to the participants of the twenty-fourth session of the European Inland Fisheries Advisory Commission.

FAO.

Report of the twenty-fourth session of the European Inland Fisheries Advisory Commission. Mondsee, Austria, 14–21 June 2006.

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ABSTRACT

The twenty-fourth session of the European Inland Fisheries Advisory Commission (EIFAC) was held in Mondsee, Austria, from 14 to 21 June 2006, in concomitance with a Symposium on Hydropower, Flood Control and Water Abstraction: Implications for Fish and Fisheries. The session reviewed EIFAC's activities since 2004 in the fields of fishery biology and management, aquaculture, protection of the aquatic environment, and social and economic issues. EIFAC revised and decided its future programme of work, in particular the activities which should be carried out until the next session of the Commission in 2008. The twenty-fifth session will be preceded by a Symposium that will focus on interactions between socio-economic and ecological objectives of inland fisheries, commercial and recreational, and aquaculture.

Distribution:

Participants
EIFAC Members
EIFAC Mailing List
FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department
FAO Regional Fisheries Officers

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OFFICERS OF EIFAC AND CONVENERS OF AD HOC WORKING PARTIES

Chairperson:	P. Hickley
First Vice-Chairperson:	K. Pinter
Second Vice-Chairperson:	A. Jagsch
Secretary	D. Bartley

SUB-COMMISSION I – BIOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT

Chairperson:	T. Brenner
Vice-Chairperson:	J. Caffrey
Rapporteur:	I. Navodaru
Technical Secretary:	G. Marmulla

Ad hoc Working Parties

Eels	Convener	R. Poole
Fish monitoring in fresh waters	Convener	P. Hickley
Introductions and stocking	Convener	I.G. Cowx
Mapping of fish distribution and aquatic habitat quality	Convener	R. Fricke
Management of sturgeon	Convener	M. Chebanov
Fish passage best practices	Convener	M. Larinier

SUB-COMMISSION II – AQUACULTURE

Chairperson:	L. Váradi
Vice-Chairperson:	J.-P. Proteau
Rapporteur :	T. Hubenova
Technical Secretary:	U. Barg

Ad hoc Working Parties

Relationship between fish transfer and fish health	Convener	E. Hudson
Aquatic resources management in aquaculture	Convener	M. Verdegem
Organic fish farming	Convener	V. Hilge
Market perspectives of European Freshwater aquaculture (jointly with European Community)	Convener	L. Váradi
Network of Aquaculture Centres Central and Eastern Europe		L. Váradi

SUB-COMMISSION III – PROTECTION OF THE AQUATIC RESOURCE

Chairperson		G. Castelnaud
Vice-Chairperson:		E. Ciccotti
Rapporteur		C. Popa
Technical Secretary		U. Barg

Ad hoc Working Parties

Effects of physical modification of the aquatic habitat on fish populations	Convener	M. Zalewski
Methodology for rehabilitation of lakes and reservoirs	Convener	H. Lehtonen
Handling of fishes in fisheries and aquaculture	Convener	R. Rösch
Prevention and control of bird predation	Convener	P. Heinimaa
Liaison Group with Council of Europe	Liaison	R. Rösch
Liaison Group on EU water framework directive (WFD)	Convener	I.G. Cowx

SUB-COMMISSION IV – SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES

Chairperson:		I.G. Cowx
Vice-Chairperson:		M. Sipponen
Rapporteur:		R. Arlinghaus
Technical Secretary:		R. van Anrooy

Ad hoc Working Parties

Recreational fisheries	Convener	R. Arlinghaus
Socio-economic aspects of inland fisheries	Convener	M. Sipponen
Liaison Group on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing		

I. OPENING OF THE SESSION AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

1. The Twenty-fourth Session of the European Inland Fisheries Advisory Commission (EIFAC) was held in Mondsee, Austria, from 14 to 21 June 2006 under the Chairmanship of Mr Rudolf Müller (Switzerland). The Session was attended by 37 representatives from 20 Members of the Commission, by observers from one non-Member Nations of FAO and also by one observer from international non-governmental organizations. The List of Participants forms Appendix B to this report.
2. The representative of the Austrian Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Mr Wolfgang Stalzer, opened the Session and welcomed delegates to Austria. His address is included as Appendix D.
3. Mr Ichiro Nomura, Assistant Director-General of the Fisheries Department of FAO, welcomed the participants in the name of the Director-General of FAO, Mr Jacques Diouf. His statement is included in Appendix D.
4. The Chairperson of EIFAC, Mr Rudolf Müller (Switzerland) expressed his appreciation to the Host Government for hosting this Session. His address is included in Appendix D.
5. The Agenda which appears as Appendix A was adopted. The documents which were placed before the Commission are listed in Appendix C.

II. SYMPOSIUM ON HYDROPOWER, FLOOD CONTROL AND WATER ABSTRACTION: IMPLICATIONS FOR FISH AND FISHERIES

6. A Symposium on Hydropower, Flood Control and Water Abstraction: Implications for Fish and Fisheries was organized in conjunction with the Twenty-fourth Session of EIFAC in Mondsee, Austria, and held from 14 to 17 June 2006. The Symposium, which was chaired by Mr W. Stalzer (Austria) and convened by Mr R. Welcomme (United Kingdom) was attended by 133 participants from 28 countries. The main documentation comprised 51 papers and 23 posters. The report of the Symposium is attached as Appendix K to this report.

III. BIOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT (SUB-COMMISSION I)

7. Mr T. Brenner (Germany), Chairperson of the Sub-Commission, informed the Commission on progress in the activities agreed upon during the Twenty-third Session of the Commission. The report of the activities was submitted to the Session as EIFAC/XXIV/2006/4 and EIFAC/XXIV/2006/Inf.4.

Joint EIFAC/ICES Ad Hoc Working Party on Eels (Convener: W. Dekker)

8. The history of the Working Party was recapitulated, pointing out that it had become a Joint EIFAC/ICES Working Party in 1998. A widespread decline in eel recruitment was observed between 1983 and 1985. By 1993, this decline in recruitment, along with a stock-wide reduction in landings, was leading to serious concern. The Working Party provides scientific advice on stock data and eel management, particularly in relation to the European Union (EU) Action Plan for the Recovery of Eel and inclusion of eel in the Data Collection Regulation.

9. Recruitment of eel is at an historical low, with no obvious signs of recovery, and exploitation of the stock is biologically unsustainable. The Working Group recommends that an international recovery plan for the European eel stock be urgently developed and that exploitation and other anthropogenic impacts on production/escapement of silver eels be reduced to as close to zero as possible, until such a plan is agreed upon and implemented. The report of the Rome 2006 meeting has been finalized in an agreed joint EIFAC/ICES publication format. ICES and FAO still have to agree on how to share printing costs.

10. Plenary discussion highlighted the following issues:

- The EU updated the progress on the discussions relating to the Commission proposal to the Council Regulation establishing measures for the recovery of the stock of European eel. Approval date is still open but would presumably be during the first half of 2007.
- The European Fisheries Fund (EFF) will provide a financing possibility for restocking in the case that it is explicitly foreseen as a conservation measure defined in the Community Legal Act. It will be at the discretion of Member States to allocate the resources from the EFF to national restocking programmes for eel.
- The recovery of eel will require control and management of a number of issues, including the control of fisheries, barrier, turbine and pumping mortality, environmental quality and disease and parasites. Spawner quality issues i.e. disease, parasites and contaminants are highly likely to impact on migration and spawning success.
- The need for stocking for conservation purposes, and not for supporting fisheries or aquaculture, was highlighted.
- A call for renewed, co-ordinated European research into artificial propagation of eel was made.
- The considerable impact of cormorant predation on eel in many European waters was stressed.
- The urgent development of the stock assessment toolbox was considered to be important and this was discussed in conjunction with determining the escapement targets (40 per cent Spawning Stock Biomass - SSB).
- The need for implementation of comparable measures in marine waters, which support measures taken in inland waters was noted.

Ad Hoc Working Party on Fish Monitoring in Fresh Waters (Convener: P. Hickley)

11. As requested, the Terms of Reference were presented and adopted (See Appendix E)

12. During its Wierzba meeting in 2004, the WP commented on the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) draft standard entitled "Water quality - Guidance on the scope and selection of fish sampling methods". This Standard (prEN 14962), prepared by Mr Dehus (Germany), is about to be published.

13. Links were maintained with the Fish-based Assessment Method for the Ecological Status of European Rivers (FAME) project by some members of the Working Party also being FAME partner delegates. The project was completed during November 2004.¹

¹ The final leaflet can be downloaded from: http://fame.boku.ac.at/downloads/FAME_Leaflet_web.pdf

14. The Working Party made progress with an Information Note on Electric Fishing Best Practice. It is hoped that member countries will field-trial the draft guidelines. The draft document has been posted on the EIFAC web site.²

15. The Working Party commenced work on a short manual on sampling methods for the monitoring of fish populations in freshwaters. The draft document will be posted on the EIFAC website. The Convener urges users to send him comments electronically so that the guidelines can be completed and finalized.

16. The Working Party continued to provide its regularly updated list of fisheries-related conferences.

17. A joint EIFAC/CEN workshop was convened to produce a draft standard on "Water quality – Sampling fish with hydroacoustics". The Workshop was held in Dorset (UK) on 22-23 March 2006 and was attended by 15 selected experts from 9 countries. The output comprised an initial draft standard which has been taken to CEN for adoption and a decision is expected very soon.

Ad Hoc Working Party on Introductions and Stocking (Convener: I. Cowx)

18. The adopted Terms of Reference are attached as Appendix F.

19. The Convener of the Working Party reported that, during the intersessional period, a review of stocking and introductions in EIFAC countries was being redrafted but could not be finalized. The review updates and expands that produced for the European Commission in 1999. A key output of this study is a framework to update the EIFAC Guidelines on Stocking and Introductions. This work has been used as a major contribution to the EU Council regulation "concerning use of alien and locally absent species in aquaculture".³

20. The EIFAC work will form the basis of several initiatives, including an England and Wales Environment Agency project on guidelines for stocking and introduction of fish and a proposed intervention by FAO to produce guidelines on stock enhancement to implement the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. The latter will be completed during 2006.

21. The Working Party was represented at the Biological Invasions in Inland Waters workshop in Florence in 2005.⁴ The Convener of the WP presented the work of EIFAC and discussed the proposals to build risk assessment strategies into the Code of Practice.

22. The Working Party has been in contact with the ICES working group on Introductions and Transfers of Marine Organisms to formulate a joint set of guidelines for aquatic organisms. This has culminated in a submission to the European Commission for funding under the Science to Support Policy funding call for a project entitled: Environmental impacts of alien species in aquaculture. A decision is expected towards the end of the year.

Ad Hoc Working Party on Mapping of Fish Distribution and Aquatic Habitat Quality (Convener: R. Fricke)

23. A set of fish distribution maps for UK and Ireland is now available to start the database. However, suitable maps for mapping of European inland water fishes and aquatic

² <http://www.fao.org/WAICENT/FAOINFO/FISHERY/body/eifac/WGFishMon/default.asp>

³ See http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2006/com2006_0154en01.pdf

⁴ <http://www.dbag.unifi.it/inwat/>

habitat quality are not available as the existing maps (FAO) are not sufficiently detailed and contain numerous errors. It is therefore necessary to either purchase or develop new maps of aquatic systems of the EIFAC area. Funding could not be made available from FAO this year, but attempts will continue to find funding. The WP deals with both rivers and lakes and has been requested to give advice on harmonizing taxonomic treatment, distribution of information, and methodologies in the EIFAC member countries in the process of the implementation of the EU WFD.

Joint EIFAC/GFCM Ad Hoc Working Party on Management of Sturgeon (Convener: M. Chebanov)

24. A questionnaire on management of sturgeon was sent to all members of EIFAC and GFCM but as there was little response this will be repeated.

25. At the First International Workshop on the Biology, Conservation and Sustainable Development of Sturgeon in Southern Europe held in Granada, Spain, some papers regarding conservation of Eurasian sturgeon were presented in accordance with the WP terms of reference.

26. A long-term project on mass tagging of sturgeon juveniles in the Black and Azov Seas has been brought forth by the Russian members of the WP in late December 2005. This new initiative of the Russian Federation for the Black Sea basin was supported by some sturgeon experts from Ukraine, Bulgaria, and Romania in order to develop a joint basin programme.

27. Since 2004, some sturgeon projects with the participation of Greek, Bulgarian and Turkish members of the WP were initiated. During the intersessional period, members of the WP contributed towards the preparation of an Action Plan for Danube Sturgeons which was organized in 2005 by the Austrian WWF for the Council of Europe. The objective is to secure and restore, viable populations of all Danube sturgeon species and forms by sustainable management and restoration of their natural habitats and migratory pathways. The WP linked its activities with the Black Sea Sturgeon Management Group (BSSMG). The members of the WP are also involved in revising a new (2006) version of the IUCN Red List Assessment – Eurasian Sturgeon species.

28. The convener of the WP in collaboration with other Russian members of the WP has compiled the publications “Sturgeon Breeding and Rearing Handbook” (in Russian) and “A field guide: Early Sexing and Staging Maturity in Live Sturgeons by Using Ultrasound Technique”.

29. The delegates from Romania and Bulgaria informed the Session about the national activities for sturgeon protection and management. Romania has *inter alia* established a 10-year catch ban for Black Sea sturgeon. Bulgaria sees the need for a comprehensive tagging programme to distinguish wild and artificially breed sturgeon.

Programme of Sub-Commission I

30. In addition to the existing Working Parties, a new EIFAC Working Party on Fish Passage Best Practices was created as a follow-up to a recommendation formulated by the EIFAC symposium that preceded the Session. Mr M. Larinier (France) was appointed as the Convener.

31. The adopted Terms of Reference and the composition of this new WP are attached as Appendix G.

Election of Officers

32. The following persons were elected: Chairperson: T. Brenner (Germany), Vice-Chairperson: J. Caffrey (Ireland), Rapporteur: I. Navodaru (Romania).

IV. AQUACULTURE (SUB-COMMISSION II)

33. The Chairperson of the Sub-Commission, Mr L. Varadi (Hungary) introduced the activities and achievements of the Sub-Commission, as presented in EIFAC/XXIV/2006/5 and EIFAC/XXIV/2006/ Inf.5.

Ad Hoc Working Party on the Relationship between Fish Transfer and Fish Health (Convener: E. Hudson)

34. No report from the convener had been received during the intersessional period. The convener could not attend the current Session due to work emergencies.

35. The Chairperson invited delegates to consider a decision to discontinue the work of this WP or to continue its work with new TORs and new active experts. The WP could take note, and possibly participate in the forthcoming “Regional Workshop on Aquatic Animal Health in Eastern Europe” which is to be held in November 2007, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the context of an FAO Technical Cooperation Programme project.

36. The Sub-Commission reiterated the importance of EIFAC work on fish health management issues. One special issue is currently the spread of Koi herpes virus affecting carp aquaculture in a growing number of countries. It was also recognized that fish health issues include fish welfare aspects, and collaboration could be sought with experts of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), and the recently established network Disease Interactions and Pathogen Exchange between Farm and Wild Aquatic Animal Populations (DIPNET).⁵

37. Mr J.P. Proteau volunteered to assist Mr Varadi by contacting possibly interested experts and networks, and by initiating a process of reformulating the TORs for this WP.

Ad Hoc Working Party on Aquatic Resources Management in Aquaculture (Convener: M. Verdegem)

38. Mr Verdegem gave an overview of the scope of past and planned activities of the WP. This included the comparison of water use in agriculture and aquaculture, and the envisaged preparation of a comprehensive review on “Use and re-use of water in aquaculture”. The proposed chapters of this book will include:

- (i) Review of water use worldwide;
- (ii) Global water use in aquaculture;

⁵ <http://www.dipnet.info>

- (iii) Water use in the aquaculture production chain;
- (iv) Future growth in aquaculture production and related water needs;
- (v) Approaches to reduce water use in aquaculture;
- (vi) Costs and economics of water use in aquaculture;
- (vii) Recommended practices for water use in aquaculture;
- (viii) Research priorities and training.

39. A mini-Symposium is planned for mid 2007. The scope of the activity will include participation at the upcoming conference on water use in aquaculture in China as well as a review of the recent Department for International Development (UK) review study on water use in aquaculture in developing countries. Several publishers have been approached for the publication of the book.

40. The Sub-Commission appreciated and welcomed the efforts and the initiative by this WP.

Ad Hoc Working Party on Organic Fish Farming (Convener: V. Hilge)

41. Messrs Varadi and Hilge recognized that very valuable and comprehensive information on European organic fish farming had been collected by the Working Party since its establishment. However, there were no major new technical developments.

42. The Sub-Commission recognized that organic aquaculture continues to be an important issue throughout Europe as well as globally. It is included in the European Fisheries Fund. The European Commission is currently working on the inclusion of aquaculture into the ongoing process of developing rules and common guidelines and standards for organic agriculture in Europe. Several delegates identified the linkages of organic fish farming standards and ecolabelling procedures and standards for fisheries and aquaculture products.

43. Mr Hilge agreed to produce a final summary on the key findings and conclusions of his Working Party's efforts (see Appendix H). Mme Tiainen-Balsby (EC) agreed to prepare a short summary of ongoing developments and processes of establishing guidelines for organic aquaculture within the framework of the EC's work (see Appendix I).

44. Recognizing the current effort at EC level, the Sub-Commission concluded that the activity of this Working Party could be suspended however keeping in mind to revitalize it once new issues and additional interest would emerge.

Ad Hoc Working Party on Market Perspectives of European Freshwater Aquaculture (Convener: L. Váradi)

45. Mr Varadi emphasized that marketing of freshwater fish is still a very critical issue both in Europe and worldwide, and that it would be desirable to continue the series of technical workshops on this issue and to explore collaboration between FAO and DG Fish (EC) as done during the joint exercise in 2001. He proposed options for discussion to discontinue the Working Party, to transfer it to Sub-Commission IV and to develop new TORs and to involve new active experts.

46. Mme Tiainen-Balsby (EC) confirmed that presently no funds are available for such activities at DG Fish. However, if one or more member countries would take the initiative, then there may be possibilities to find co-funding sources. FAO secretariat indicated it would

provide technical support. Several delegates confirmed interest in the issues of marketing of freshwater (including organic) aquaculture products.

47. The Convener agreed that he would continue efforts of identifying interested experts as well as possible funding sources. He would also contact EUROFISH⁶ for possible collaboration. The Sub-Commission appreciated Mr Varadi's continued efforts.

Eastern European Affairs: Network of Aquaculture Centers in Central and Eastern Europe (NACEE)

48. Mr Varadi recognized that NACEE provides a platform for collaboration between EU and non EU countries in Eastern Europe on aquaculture strategies, policies and regulatory frameworks. It facilitated collaboration between FAO and Eastern European countries on the preparation of national and regional aquaculture reviews. FAO's Director-General recently granted liaison status to NACEE.

Election of Officers

49. The following persons were elected: Mr L. Varadi (Hungary), Chairperson; Mr J.P. Proteau (France), Vice-Chairperson; Mrs. T. Hubenova (Bulgaria), Rapporteur.

V. PROTECTION OF THE AQUATIC RESOURCE (SUB-COMMISSION III)

50. The Chairperson of the Sub-Commission, Mr L. Raat (The Netherlands) had announced his retirement during the Meeting of EIFAC's Executive Committee in June 2005. Mr G. Castelnaud (France), Vice-Chairperson introduced the activities and achievements of the Sub-Commission, as presented in EIFAC/XXIV/2006/6 and EIFAC/XXIV/2006/Inf. 6.

Ad Hoc Working Party on the Effects of Physical Modification of the Aquatic Habitat on Fish Populations (Convener: M. Zalewski)

51. Recognizing the outputs of the WP and the recent establishment of an UNESCO European Center for Ecohydrology, the Sub-Commission decided to discontinue this Working Party. Special appreciation was expressed for the efforts and dedication by the Convener.

Ad Hoc Working Party on the Methodologies for Rehabilitation of Lakes and Reservoirs (Convener: H. Lehtonen)

52. The book on Rehabilitation of Lakes and Reservoirs for Fish (Lehtonen, Cowx and Müller editors) is well advanced and its publication is planned for the end of 2006. Mr Cowx invited contributions of photographs. He also indicated that approximately US\$ 8 000 – 10 000 will still be required for co-financing of the publication. The WP will end its work with the publication of the book.

⁶ <http://www.eurofish.dk>

**Ad Hoc Working Party on the Handling of Fishes in Fisheries and Aquaculture
(Outgoing Convener: A.J.P. Raat)**

53. Mr Raat retired and the position of the WP convener became vacant. The report of this Working Party has been finalized and will be published as an EIFAC Occasional Paper.

54. The Sub-Commission recalled the significance of fish welfare issues in commercial and recreational fisheries and aquaculture and confirmed its decision of 2004 that a draft EIFAC position statement on handling of fishes be prepared for consideration by the Commission.

55. Several delegates agreed to search for experts who would be competent and willing to take over convenership for the WP and who would start work on the formulation of the EIFAC position statement. The Chairperson will liaise with interested delegates and experts to ensure follow-up on the envisaged task.

Liaison Group on Prevention and Control of Bird Predation (Outgoing Convener: E. Staub)

56. With the retirement of Mr Staub as WP Convener Mr Petri Heinimaa (Finland) agreed to become Convener. In his last report Mr Staub recommended strengthened participation of EIFAC fisheries experts in the INTERCAFE project.⁷ The Sub-Commission reiterated the importance of EIFAC's work on bird predation issues in fisheries and aquaculture, and decided to re-establish the Working Party status for this activity. Delegates discussed several related issues including the need for effective management measures and policy statements, socio-economic consequences and financial implications, damage estimation, mitigation and compensation options. The need for work and intervention at the political level was noted. The Sub-Commission agreed with Mr Heinimaa that new TORs would be formulated and new experts identified.

Liaison Group with Council of Europe (Liaison: R. Rösch)

57. The Sub-Commission welcomed Mr Rösch's report on activities by the Council of Europe, in particular the "Standing Committee of the European convention for the protection of animals kept for farming purposes". The Sub-Commission decided that this Liaison Group should join the WP on Handling of Fish in Fisheries and Aquaculture.

Liaison Group on EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) (Convener: I. Cowx)

58. Mr Cowx confirmed that the existing liaison group will continue its specific information collation work on riverine fisheries issues in the WFD provided that the proposed EFI (European Fish Index) Plus project is financed. It was noted that lacustrine-specific assessments needed better development.

59. The Sub-Commission recognized the Symposium recommendation for EIFAC to establish a new WP to provide guidance on the implementation of the WFD. The Sub-Commission agreed that the TOR of this WP would need to be developed, and that close

⁷ www.intercafeproject.net

consultation with this Liaison Group be ensured. Alien species were recognized as important biological impact factors in the context of WFD applications.

Other Liaison Groups

60. The Sub-Commission decided to discontinue the activities of the Liaison Groups on Influence of Management Practices on the Environment and on Ecological and Human Health Effects from Endocrine Disrupting Substances.

Election of Officers

61. The following persons were elected: Mr G. Castelnaud (France), Chairperson; Mrs E. Ciccotti (Italy), Vice-Chairperson; Mrs C. Popa (Romania), Rapporteur.

VI. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES (SUB-COMMISSION IV)

62. The Chairperson of the Sub-Commission, Mr I.G. Cowx (United Kingdom), informed the Commission of the progress achieved during the intersessional period. The report was made available to the Session as documents EIFAC/XXIV/2006/7 and EIFAC/XXIV/2006/Inf.7.

Ad Hoc Working Party on Recreational Fisheries (Convener: R. Arlinghaus)

63. Progress within this WP was largely limited to organizational procedures, with little action towards the proposed refocus developed in the 23rd Session of EIFAC. The WP concentrated on formulation of a Code of Practice for Recreational Fisheries. Although some efforts were made by the European Anglers Alliance (EAA) on a code, the document requires multi-sectoral linkages and to be brought in line with the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. The WP therefore developed a strategy to finalize the Code of Practice. This strategy was presented to the Commission as “Proposal for financing the production of a European code of practice for recreational fisheries” EIFAC/XXIV/2006/Inf.12. The proposal included three options: 1) abolition of the WP, 2) joint funding of the proposal by a donor, EAA and FAO to finally secure the desired output, or 3) take advantage of national level initiatives without a guaranteed output. The members recognised the need for the Code and the delegate from the Netherlands indicated that he would seek financial support for the proposed project and report back to the Sub-Commission. It was further suggested to contact and seek involvement of Confédération Internationale de la Pêche Sportive (CIPS) in the project.

64. Mr R. Arlinghaus will coordinate these activities with support from Mr B. Breton, the recently elected President of the EAA.

Ad Hoc Working Party on Socio-Economic Aspects of Inland Fisheries (Convener: M. Sipponen)

65. The Convener of the Working Party, Mr M. Sipponen informed the Commission of progress made in the inter-sessional period. He outlined the results from a survey about the social and economic benefits of recreational fishing that highlighted the importance of

recreational fisheries in economic terms, participation in recreational fishing, and disparity in definitions of recreational fisheries between countries, survey methods used and sample representation. The preliminary research recommendations included:

- EIFAC member countries should use random household samples (instead of surveying licensed anglers), and
- Irrespective of spatial dimensions of evaluation studies, standardization of methods is essential in the pursuit of compatible results

66. A draft report will be circulated to national correspondents and experts for comments and additional inputs. A number of members, including Norway, The Netherlands, Portugal, Romania and Ireland indicated that they had additional information that they would forward to the convener.

67. The Convener presented the current TORs of the Working Party and suggested an updated TORs with the following two outputs for the inter-sessional period:

- Finalize and publish methodological guidelines for undertaking social and economic surveys on recreational fisheries.
- A report of the significance of private property rights on the alternative traits to manage inland commercial fisheries.

68. There was debate on the meaning of property rights in relation to co-management approaches and on the scope of the term recreational fisheries, which was clarified by the convener and would be taken into consideration in the work of the WP. The updated TORs were endorsed by the Commission.

69. Several members congratulated the WP with its achievements and reiterated the importance of EIFAC working on the socio-economics of recreational and commercial inland fisheries.

Liaison Group on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing

70. The Chairperson presented, as agreed in the intersessional Executive Committee meeting, a short summary of issues related to IUU fishing in inland waters. He mentioned examples of IUU fishing, including:

- fishing without a licence
- use of illegal fishing methods and gears,
- fishing in closed areas or seasons,
- failure to report or misreporting of catches,
- unregulated movement of fish /theft of fish, and
- escape of farmed fish.

71. The Chairperson referred to his current activities for FAO on the International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IPOA-IUU) in inland waters, which is in a draft stage, and highlighted the importance of this issue for the EIFAC region. It was noted that the underlying causes of IUU fishing in the member countries can arise from cultural differences and therefore strategies for dealing with the problem must be case sensitive. It was mentioned that eco-labelling may be one tool for addressing IUU issues.

72. The Commission agreed that a liaison group on this issue be formed. The Chairperson agreed to adjust the IPOA-IUU for endorsement by EIFAC at its 25th session.

Other activities

73. Sub-Commission IV prepared a draft proposal for the organization of the 2008 EIFAC symposium, preliminary entitled “Interactions between the socio-economic and ecological objectives of inland capture fisheries and aquaculture”. The draft proposal was presented for comments and suggestions to the Executive Committee and delegates at the start of the 24th Session of the Commission.

Election of Officers

74. The following were elected: Mr I.G. Cowx (UK), Chairperson; Mr M. Sipponen (Finland), Vice-Chairperson; Mr R. Arlinghaus (Germany), Rapporteur.

VII. ADOPTION OF THE SUB-COMMISSIONS PROGRESS REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

75. The Session adopted the reports and recommendations of the Sub-Commissions as well as the report of the Executive Committee Meeting in 2005.

VIII. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE SYMPOSIUM

76. The Session adopted the report of the Symposium on Hydropower, Flood Control and Water Abstraction: Implications for Fish and Fisheries (Appendix K).

77. The Session recognized that the major conclusion of the Symposium was that the expression “green technology” for small-scale hydropower production (SHP) is mistaken as far as fish and other aquatic organisms are concerned as SHP may have negative impacts on these. Therefore energy produced from hydropower should not generally be considered as “green”. It equally endorsed all other recommendations that are contained in the report (Appendix K)

78. With regard to the recommendation that a Working Party on Fish Passage Best Practices be set up, Sub-Commission I has already taken action to insert this new WP in its programme. The recommendation that a WP be created to assist EIFAC member countries in conforming to the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive was referred to the Chairperson of Sub-Commission III with the request to establish formally the Terms of Reference and to find a convener. This WP should start work as soon as possible, and prior to being ratified by the next Session of EIFAC.

IX. ASSESSMENT OF THE ROLE AND FUNCTIONING OF EIFAC

79. Discussion of the document EIFAC/XXIV/2006/8 “Assessment of the Role and Functioning of EIFAC” led to the following conclusions and decisions by the Commission.

80. Seven key areas were identified as important in improving the work of the Commission:

- Additional funding is required and partnerships should be sought;
- The role of national correspondents has been defined in Appendix J;
- Additional efforts should be made to liaise with the EU;
- Emerging issues has been made a standing item on the agenda;

- Technical and policy output and addressing Member's expectations;
- EIFAC list server has been established at the Secretariat;
- Publication policy will continue and seek to involve junior scientists.

81. The Secretariat will help delegates be better prepared for Sessions by improved formatting of documents so that actions and requests of the delegates are better understood. The activities of the Secretariat should not only be maintained but strengthened since the work of the Secretariat is essential for the accomplishment of EIFAC's mission and the functioning of the Sub-Commissions.

82. The outcomes of recommendations taken as a result of discussions of the issues raised in document EIFAC/XXIV/2006/8 will be evaluated at the Twenty-fifth Session, for which the Chairperson will prepare a short report.

National reports

83. Mr Phil Hickley (UK) introduced document EIFAC/XXIV/2006/9 on the re-establishment of National Reports. National reports had been produced in the past, but the practice was discontinued.

84. The Commission was presented with options that included a) do nothing, b) re-instate national reporting requirements, c) make available existing information, and d) produce summary review reports. There was a diversity of opinions expressed by the Session and no consensus was reached on how to proceed. Therefore the issue was returned to the Vice Chairpersons of EIFAC to explore means to assemble information on inland fisheries. As an interim measure, Members were requested to provide links to their national websites so that these links could be placed on the EIFAC website.

Collaboration with partners

85. The Chairperson introduced Appendix 3 of the EIFAC/XXIV/2006/2 on observers invited to the 24th Session, and regretted that more observers and collaborators did not attend. Efforts should be made to establish better links with partners and give input where appropriate, especially the EU, IUCN and the Ramsar Convention that have several areas of work relevant to EIFAC. Reference was made to the Seventh World Wetlands Day, 2 February 2007, focusing on wetlands and fisheries.⁸

Emerging issues

86. The Chairperson introduced document paragraph 12, EIFAC/XXIV/2006/2. Among the emerging issues previously identified the re-establishment of a WP on crayfish was endorsed. Mr M. Pursiainen (Finland) has agreed to serve as Convener. The Chairperson of Sub-Commission I will contact the Convener to facilitate establishing TORs and participation. The item will be taken up by the Executive Committee.

87. The Executive Committee identified some emerging issues. National Correspondents were also asked to list emerging issues of importance to member countries. Key issues

⁸ http://www.ramsar.org/wwd/7/wwd2007_index.htm

identified included fish movements and diseases, non-native species, eutrophication, habitat degradation and pollution. The responses will be collated, sent to the National Correspondents for information, and a synthesis prepared for the next Executive Committee meeting.

X. SYMPOSIUM IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION OF EIFAC

88. The Commission agreed that the international Symposium to be held in conjunction with the Twenty-fifth Session of EIFAC should concentrate on interactions between socio-economic and ecological objectives of inland fisheries, commercial and recreational, and aquaculture. Several delegates stressed the need to focus particularly on socio-economic aspects and suggested to increase participant interaction by limiting the number of presentations in favour of a workshop-approach through which practical recommendations and suggestions can be provided to the session. Issues for attention include product quality improvement and cooperation within the fishery product chain to increase sustainability. Interests in participation and collaboration were received from NACEE and EAS at the session, and earlier from EAFE.

89. Mr I. Cowx agreed to serve as Convener for the Symposium and finalize the prospectus. Delegates were invited to send their comments (if any) before 30th July 2006 to the Convener or the Technical Secretary. The Draft Prospectus of the Symposium, as endorsed by the Commission, is included in this report as Appendix F.

XI. ANY OTHER MATTERS

90. The Chairperson informed the Session that a revised EIFAC brochure is nearly finalized and will be placed as a pdf file on the EIFAC web-site and mailed to national correspondents electronically; hard copies of the brochure will be available from the Secretariat on request.

91. An international workshop on the artificial reproduction of the European eel demonstrated that artificial reproduction and mass production of eel fingerlings is no longer an unrealistic goal. Japanese institutes expect to achieve this within four years. In Europe scientific knowledge on this issue is excellent and would allow artificial reproduction of eel for aquaculture purposes. However, collaboration between the various European institutes and coordination of their activities with a clear common objective is needed. This can only be realized with commitment and sufficient support for several years.

92. Therefore, EIFAC recommends that its members actively cooperate in research activities related to reproduction and larval rearing of the European eel. Delegates expressed the view that the European Commission be requested by EIFAC to coordinate and facilitate these research activities.

XII. ELECTION OF EIFAC OFFICERS

93. The Commission elected the following Officers of the Commission: Mr Phil Hickley (United Kingdom) Chairperson, Mr Karoly Pinter (Hungary), First Vice-Chairperson, and Mr Albert Jagsch (Austria), Second Vice-Chairperson. The Session acknowledged the

excellent contribution made to the field of European inland fisheries by Mr Rudolf Müller (retiring as Chairperson of EIFAC) and thanked him for his many years of service to EIFAC.

XIII. DATE AND PLACE OF THE TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION

94. The date and place will be determined by the Director-General of FAO in consultation with the Chairperson of EIFAC.

95. The Executive Committee will hold its next meeting mid-2007 in Rome.

XIV. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT AND CLOSING OF THE SESSION

96. The Report of the Session was adopted on 21 June 2006. The Session was closed at 15.50 hrs.

APPENDIX A

Agenda and timetable

1. **Opening and adoption of the Agenda**
2. **Symposium On Hydropower, Flood Control and Water Abstraction: Implications for Fish and Fisheries**
3. **Sub-Commission I (Biology and management)**
 Review of intersessional activities:
 - Eels
 - Fish monitoring in fresh waters
 - Introductions and stocking
 - Mapping of fish distribution and aquatic habitat quality
 - Management of sturgeon
 Election of Officers
4. **Sub-Commission II (Aquaculture)**
 Review of intersessional activities:
 - Relationship between fish transfers and fish health
 - Aquatic resources management in aquaculture
 - Water resources management in aquaculture
 - Organic fish farming
 - Market perspectives of European freshwater aquaculture
 - Network of Aquaculture Centres in Central and Eastern Europe
 Election of Officers
5. **Sub-Commission III (Protection of the aquatic resource)**
 Review of intersessional activities:
 - Effects of Physical Modifications of the Aquatic Habitat on Fish Populations
 - Methodologies for Rehabilitation of Lakes and Reservoirs
 - Handling of Fishes in Fisheries and Aquaculture
 - Liaison group on Prevention and Control of Bird Prevention
 - Liaison group with Council of Europe
 - Liaison group on EU Water Framework Directive (WFD)
 - Other liaison groups
 Election of Officers

6. **Sub-Commission IV (Social and economic issues)**
Review of intersessional activities:
 - Recreational fisheries
 - Socioeconomic aspects of inland fisheries
 - Liaison group on illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishingOther activities
Election of Officers
7. **Adoption of the reports and recommendations from the Sub-Commissions**
8. **Adoption of the Report of the Symposium**
9. **Assessment of the role and functioning of EIFAC**
National reports
Collaboration with partners
Emerging issues
10. **Symposium in conjunction with the Twenty-fifth Session of EIFAC**
11. **Any other matters**
12. **Election of EIFAC Officers**
13. **Date and place of the Twenty-fifth Session**
14. **Adoption of the Report**

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APPENDIX C

List of documents

EIFAC/XXIV/2006/1	Provisional Agenda and Timetable
EIFAC/XXIV/2006/2	Summary Record of Meeting of the EIFAC Executive Committee, Rome, 30 May-1 June 2005
EIFAC/XXIV/2006/3	Summary Report of the Symposium
EIFAC/XXIV/2006/4	Summary of Progress Report Sub-Commission I
EIFAC/XXIV/2006/5	Summary of Progress Report Sub-Commission II
EIFAC/XXIV/2006/6	Summary of Progress Report Sub-Commission III
EIFAC/XXIV/2006/7	Summary of Progress Report Sub-Commission IV
EIFAC/XXIV/2006/8	Assessment of the role and functioning of EIFAC: Chairperson's report 2006
EIFAC/XXIV/2006/9	National Reports Discussion Paper
EIFAC/XXIV/2006/Inf.1	Provisional List of Documents
EIFAC/XXIV/2006/Inf.2	Provisional List of Participants
EIFAC/XXIV/2006/Inf.3	Prospectus of the Symposium on Hydropower, Flood Control and Water Abstraction: Implications for Fish and Fisheries
EIFAC/XXIV/2006/Inf.4	Progress Report, Sub-Commission I
EIFAC/XXIV/2006/Inf.5	Progress Report, Sub-Commission II
EIFAC/XXIV/2006/Inf.6	Progress Report, Sub-Commission III
EIFAC/XXIV/2006/Inf.7	Progress Report, Sub-Commission IV
EIFAC/XXIV/2006/Inf.8	List of EIFAC Correspondents
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EIFAC/XXIV/2006/Inf.11	Report of the EIFAC Symposium on Hydropower, Flood Control and Water Abstractions: Implications for Fish and Fisheries

APPENDIX D

Opening addresses

**Address by Mr Wolfgang Stalzer
Head of the Water Division of the Federal Ministry of
Agriculture and Forestry, Environment and Water Management**

Mr Ichiro Nomura (Assistant Director General of the FAO Fisheries Department),
Mr Chairperson (Dr Rudolf Müller), Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen!

It is my pleasure to welcome you on behalf of DI Josef Pröll, Minister for Agriculture and Forestry, Environment and Water Management, to the 24th Session of EIFAC. It is a great privilege to host this event in this famous lake district of the Salzkammergut. In this area there are the largest and deepest Inner-Austrian lakes and we are very proud to state that they belong to the cleanest lakes in Europe.

The lakes of Austria are an essential component in regard to water and water bodies. They are particularly significant in terms of recreation, health and well being, and thus of central importance for tourism. From the ecological and economic perspective protecting lakes is a central objective of Austrian water management.

During the last decades Austria laid great efforts on wastewater treatment. Thus most of our lakes are in a state of near drinking water quality. In regard to the sapro-biological status nearly 90% of our rivers have been restored to quality class I or II (on a scale of IV). At present 89 % of the population is linked via sewerage systems with corresponding wastewater treatment plants. These remove to a large share also the nutrients N and P, and even plants with small sizes are required to nitrify, in order to protect juvenile fish in the receiving waters. Investments in urban water management, besides having a positive impact on water quality, give a strong push to the economy and the job market. Austria spends in total between 1.5 and 2% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the protection of the quality of surface waters, thereby securing or creating over 13.000 jobs.

Water management involves the way we use water as a basis of life, as an economic factor, and as an element of danger. In this context public interests – as e.g. safety, health, flood protection, etc – have to be preserved, conflicts between public and private interests have to be resolved, and a rational approach to all issues of water and waters is aimed for. The sustainable protection and use of the resource water and water bodies, and having also future generations in mind, is hopefully ensured. The Austrian Water Act lays the ground for these objectives.

The EU Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC is transposed into the Austrian Water Act through its year 2003 amendment. Essential innovations concerned water management based on river basin districts, a mandate to improve conservation to at least a good ecological status of all water bodies in combination with a prohibition of their deterioration, as well as the active involvement of the public.

Fish are, for the first time, part of a European monitoring method designed to observe the ecological status of all surface water bodies. Our aim is to increase our knowledge on

ecological relations and their effect on the native fish fauna, and to contribute to a sustainable river basin management in order to preserve biodiversity in our surface waters.

Almost all of Austria's territory (over 96%) is situated in the catchment area of river Danube. Austria's surface waters comprise some 32.000 kilometres of water bodies bigger than 10 km² as sub-basin size for running waters, and about 2.134 stagnant water bodies larger than 1 ha, of which 814 are natural lakes.

Today, in all two lamprey and 78 fish species live in Austria's surface waters. Four of originally 64 indigenous species are already extinct, and 18 fish species have been introduced in some way.

Fish lead a hidden life below the surface of our water bodies; nevertheless they are subject to numerous pressures and constraints. Pollution, nutrient load, hydropower production, sills and weirs, straightening, channelization, bank revetment, paving of the river bed, unbalanced protection of fish predators and recreational fisheries do affect the natural fish assemblages significantly.

The native type-specific fish fauna is dependent on habitat quality, especially diversity of structures and longitudinal and lateral connectivity of our brooks and rivers. The presence or absence of fish in running waters, species composition and length frequencies are the biotic response to technical measures and anthropogenic threats in the water bodies concerned. Based on this observation fish are well suited biological indicators for a number of different impacts, especially for hydro-morphological pressures. It is not without reason that 60 percent of our recent native fish taxa are deemed vulnerable and partially even threatened by extinction.

Many aspects of the protection of fish life as well as fisheries in Austria are covered by the Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management. The Ministry does not have a separate fishery office, but includes this work in units dealing with animal husbandry, commerce and water management. The actual administration of fishery issues at site is handled at the level of the "Länder" that had decided to form Austria. The nine governments ("Landesregierungen") keep in these issues in touch with the Federal Ministry. No single Federal Fisheries Act exists in Austria, each Land (Federal Province) has its own Act relating to fishing and fisheries issues. Consequently these Acts vary from one Land to the other. The Länder (Federal Provinces) also keep records of fishing rights and issue fishing licenses.

Most of the Länder have their own fishery organisations; these are autonomous administrative units prescribed by law and responsible for fishery administration and promotion for the province. In addition the Austrian Fisheries Association also exists; it is an NGO covering all of Austria and concerned with the promotion of Austrian fisheries. It is composed by the fisheries organisations of the Länder, cooperatives and scientific institutes, and several big Angling Associations. Fishing in Austria is mostly controlled by private individuals or angling/fishing associations.

Commercial fishery in former times was important both in rivers and lakes. Fishing in river Danube had its heydays in the Middle Ages when mainly different sturgeon species were caught (specimens of *Huso huso* of a length up to 7 meters). Nowadays commercial fishing in

rivers has become unimportant, in some lakes it is still run by professional fishermen. The nominal catch is about 500 tonnes/year.

There are about 400 fish farms in Austria. The production of fish for consumption was 2 700 tonnes in 2004, production of fingerlings as stock material was near to 1 000 tonnes. The consumption of fish per capita and year is about 7,5 kg. As this amount of fish cannot be produced within Austria about 55 000 tonnes of fish and fish products are imported per year. With the aid of structural funds from the European Community many projects were implemented in the last decade, thus improving the production processes and the quality of products from lake fisheries and aquaculture.

Nowadays the most important branch of fishery is angling (sport fishing). Estimations of the number of fishermen vary from 200 000 to 400 000. Angling has become a very important component of tourism in Austria.

I hope I was able to give you a short overview on the status of our waters, of fish and fisheries in Austria. I wish the members of the Commission and the participants of the Session all the good results you are in need of on the various agenda items, and you all also a pleasant stay at Mondsee, both the lake as well as the town. Translated into English Mondsee means “moon lake”.

Address by
Mr Ichiro Nomura
Assistant Director-General
Fisheries and Aquaculture Department
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Mr Wolfgang Stalzer, head of the Water Division, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Environment and Water Management, Mr Albert Jagsch (Liaison Officer to EIFAC), Mr Chairperson, distinguished delegates and observers, ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to welcome you, on behalf of the Director-General of FAO, Mr Jacques Diouf, to the 24th Session of the European Inland Fisheries Advisory Commission.

I would like to express my great pleasure and sincere gratitude to the Government of Austria for hosting this Session here on the shores of Lake Mondsee in Upper Austria. In fact however, this is the second time that Austria has hosted EIFAC in these beautiful surroundings; the 3rd Session was held here in 1964.

The area abounds in the natural beauty of the mountains, lakes and forests and is rich in culture history as well. I was pleased to learn that this area is also called “Salzkammergut” and contains over 70 lakes. The area takes its name from the rich salt deposits that were mined here over 3 000 years ago and promoted economic and cultural development to such an extent that the area was designated a World Heritage Site in 1997. To quote from the World Heritage Site text, “Human activity in the magnificent natural landscape of the Salzkammergut began in prehistoric times, with the salt deposits being exploited as early as the 2nd millennium B.C. This resource formed the basis of the area's prosperity up to the middle of the 20th century”.

Indeed this area provides an inspiring setting for our deliberations.

And the session will have a lot on which to deliberate. The vast diversity of issues relevant to work of the Commission is evidenced by the four sub-commissions to cover biology and management, aquaculture, protection of the aquatic environment, and social and economic issues; these sub-commissions are further supported by numerous working groups.

There is also diversity in the membership of EIFAC. The 34 current members include developed and developing countries and countries with economies in transition. The role of fisheries and aquaculture and how they are developed responsibly may be quite different for many Members. We can develop fisheries and aquaculture for food and improved nutrition, income generation and recreation, and we must do this with respect for the environment, natural biological diversity and human societies. EIFAC will provide a valuable forum for communicating ideas, lessons learned and advice among this diverse assemblage of countries.

One of the more enjoyable mechanisms for communicating this information is the EIFAC Symposium. I am pleased to see that this session's topic was “*Hydropower, Flood Control and Water Abstraction: Implications for Fish and Fisheries*”. While preparing the Symposium we received over 100 proposals for contributions of which 54 had been presented orally and another 40 as posters. The high number of participants, i.e. over 150 from 27 countries, underlined the relevance and importance of the symposium theme chosen and made

the symposium the most successful in the history of EIFAC. We can expect another quality EIFAC product to emerge from this Symposium.

The statutory Regional Fisheries Bodies of FAO are a valuable resource that has helped, and will continue to help, fisheries and aquaculture develop in a responsible manner. We should not forget that no other single organization has such a network of experts and expertise, and in fact, the work of EIFAC has been “exported” to regional fishery bodies throughout the world. The agenda is quite full for the current Session so I will stop here so that you can begin your work. Please be assured that we from the Secretariat will assist you to the best of our ability over the next few days and into the future.

**Address by
Mr Rudolf Müller, Switzerland
Chairperson of EIFAC**

Mr Wolfgang Stalzer, Representative of the Austrian Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Environment and Water Management, Chairperson of the Symposium

Mr Albert Jagsch, Director of the Institute for Water Ecology, Fisheries Biology and Lake Research, Federal Agency for Water Management, Scharfling, and liaison officer of the local organising committee

Mr Ichiro Nomura, Assistant Director-General, Fisheries Department, FAO

Mr Devin Bartley, Secretary of EIFAC, FAO

Esteemed Delegates, dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the 24th Session of the European Inland Fisheries Advisory Commission EIFAC held here at the magnificent Castle Hotel at Mondsee, Austria.

On behalf of all of us, I would like to ask you, Mr. Stalzer, to convey to your government our gratitude for your kind invitation to hold the 24th Session of EIFAC here in Austria. A special thank you goes to Mr. A. Jagsch and his crew from the Institute at Scharfling, who organised this event with great skill and devotion, making our stay here a most comfortable one. I extend my thanks to the town and community of Mondsee and in particular to its Mayor, Mr Miels, who so generously supported the organisers and participants of this meeting with reduced fees for the localities we are in, with transportation facilities, and many others.

It is a great honour to have among us Mr. I. Nomura from FAO who will accompany us through the Session.

At this point I would like to welcome Mr D. Bartley (FAO), who has taken over the function of Secretary of EIFAC from Mr G. Marmulla (FAO), about one year ago. I take the opportunity to express my sincere thanks to Mr Marmulla who has served EIFAC as Secretary *ad interim* for several years and whose support to the Commission has been instrumental.

Let me now come back to our host country. Austria has not only been a founding member of the Commission in 1957 and an official member since October 1958. Austria has already hosted the third Session in 1964, at Weissenbach near Attersee, not far from here. Austria has always been an active and faithful member of EIFAC, and the readiness to host this Session at Mondsee is the best proof of it. Being situated at the heart of the Alps, this country is blessed with a multitude of lakes and rivers that mostly support excellent fisheries and a large number of fish species. Austrian scientists, water engineers and administrators have been and still are at the forefront of river rehabilitation. The success of their many projects is documented by the remarkable number of fish species that have returned to the improved river sections. The restoration of fish migration across artificial barriers, such as hydro dams, in Austrian rivers is a great story of success of its own. You might also understand why this part of Austria is so famous for its abundance in freshwater: this spring, the Salzkammergut, i.e. the area where we are now, has been drenched by 25 consecutive days of rain, ending just nine days ago.

EIFAC has a long-standing tradition of combining its business sessions with a scientific symposium on a topic of the Commission's interest. This year's Symposium addresses a theme whose importance has been constantly growing over the past years. Many waters, in particular running waters, are under growing pressure, be it due to water abstraction for drinking water and irrigation purposes, or be it for the generation of electric energy to satisfy

an ever increasing demand. These water uses are aimed at improving the well-being of human populations, an undertaking that is perfectly legitimate. However, if we talk about the different aspects of water use, there is also a backside of the medal, the side of the losers: these are the aquatic ecosystems with the organisms living in it, who suffer from reduced or intermittent flow or from mechanical barriers that impede their migration and alter their habitat.

The timeliness of the symposium is documented by the great interest it has generated. Looking at the audience I am pleased to see so many participants who have found their way to this magnificent historic place in Mondsee. I am quite confident that your contributions will help to solve many problems in and around our waters, to the benefit of mankind, but perhaps even more so to the benefit of the voiceless creatures living in these waters. As you probably have noticed, there will be a Summary Report from the Symposium, something EIFAC has always been doing, with good reasons: The Report should not only summarise the results for those who have participated in the Symposium, but it is expected to publicise the findings in a more general way than the scientific Proceedings to be published in a journal or as a separate book. And finally we hope – we expect! - that the information contained in the Symposium Report will help to put the recommendations into action.

I am now going to give a short review of some selected activities of the Commission since the 23rd Session at Wierzba, Poland, in 2004. For complete information I refer to the reports of the four Sub-Commissions that have been made available to the Session in English and in French.

Sub-Commission I «Biology and Management», within its joint EIFAC/ICES Working Party on Eels, has continued efforts to help solving some of the huge problems of the European eel. Eel stocks are at an historic low, and the eel stock remains to be outside safe biological limits. This is the clear message the Working Party has been issuing for many years. Unfortunately, EIFAC as an advisory body, without any regulatory power, could not do much more than to warn. Now, as a light on the horizon, the European Commission who does have the instruments to manage marine and diadromous fish stocks has developed a Community Action Plan for the management of the European eel. In 2005 the EC has proposed a Council Regulation establishing measures that should lead to the recovery of the stock of European eel. This proposal has been discussed with Member States, the Fishing Industry and scientists in several meetings in Brussels. A few workshops have been held in 2005 and 2006 to address the nature of these measures and of possible further activities in favour of the eel. There is no doubt that the implementation of protective measures will mean painful cuts for those engaged in the eel fisheries and possibly also for those operating hydropower dams. However, it is an indispensable process if the eel stock is to recover. Future will tell how far and how quick we will travel on this difficult way.

Work on creating maps of fish distribution and aquatic habitat quality in the EIFAC region has made some grounds, but it was found that future progress would depend on the availability of suitable maps with adequate resolution. Unfortunately, this could lead to considerable costs, and ways to solve this question have to be found soon.

The Working Party on Management of Sturgeon has been very active during the last biennium. Working Party members attended and actively contributed to several workshops and conferences, such as the 5th International Symposium on Sturgeons in Ramsar, Iran, in May 2005, or the Workshop on Stocking for Rehabilitation of Fisheries in the Caspian Sea (Iran, June 2005) supported by the Fisheries Department of FAO. Members of the Working Party are involved in working out a new version of the IUCN Red List Assessment – Eurasian Sturgeon species, and in setting up an Action Plan for Danube Sturgeons which was prepared

in 2005 by the Austrian World Wide Fund for Nature for the Council of Europe. Several other projects are under way. This is a young but very active Working Party whose activities reflect the great interest in the biology, management and conservation of this endangered species complex.

Among the several activities during the intersession of Sub-Commission II “Aquaculture”, I would like to point out the major advancement that has been achieved in establishing and strengthening of the Network of Aquaculture Centers in Central and Eastern Europe (NACEE). The first meeting of directors of the collaborating institutes, supported by FAO and focusing on the formal establishment and operation of the Network, was organized at Szarvas, Hungary in November 2004. The report is posted on the EIFAC web page. A second meeting of NACEE took place in September 2005 in Astrakhan, Russian Federation, again with the support from FAO. Some of the other activities of NACEE were the establishment of its own Internet webpage, the distribution of information on aquaculture among its 31 members in 13 countries, and initiating collaboration with a number of international bodies in the water sector.

Work within Sub-Commission III «Protection of the Aquatic Resource» has been hampered by the most regrettable retirement of the Chairperson, Mr. A. Raat (the Netherlands), in autumn 2005. Still, Mr. Raat prepared the informative and highly relevant report of the WP on Handling of Fishes in Fisheries and Aquaculture for publication as an EIFAC Occasional paper. The report is due to appear in print very soon. It will be the reference document for EIFAC – and hopefully others as well – on the issue of the humane treatment of fish in fisheries and aquaculture operations.

Also located within Sub-Commission III is the Liaison Group on the Prevention and Control of Bird Predation. This issue is of great relevance for EIFAC and certainly deserves our continued attention. Member countries use quite different approaches more or less successfully to cope with the problem that involves several bird species. There is a growing trend to judge the European situation from a strongly biased bird-friendly point of view only. In order to adequately defend the interests of the fish and the fisheries, EIFAC is well advised to develop its own assessment of the situation and to publicise its well-founded point of view through adequate channels.

Progress of Sub-Commission IV “Social and Economic Issues” has been largely limited to the activity of the *Ad Hoc* Working Party on Socio-Economic Aspects of Inland-Fisheries. The Convener, M. Sipponen (Finland), has prepared a draft report on the social and economic benefits of recreational fishing that was circulated to national experts and EIFAC correspondents. The study illustrates the high economic and social value of recreational fisheries. It also provides a bibliography of references relating to the valuation of inland fisheries in Europe. The socio-economic importance of the commercial fisheries sector will be evaluated at a later stage and added to the document.

If I have presented you with a number of activities that are proceeding well within EIFAC, I also have to mention that no progress has been achieved in too many working groups. This difficulty largely resides on the fact that people who have taken on the responsibility for these working groups often do not find the time that would be needed to bring the work ahead. This situation is difficult to resolve, and I have no recipe for it. I can just only encourage those colleagues to think of their responsibility and to set priorities a little more in favour of EIFAC.

Apart from the work carried out in the Sub-Commissions and the Working Groups, several other activities have taken place within EIFAC during the intersession.

At the 23rd Session of EIFAC in June 2004, a document entitled “Assessment of the Role and Functioning of EIFAC” had been presented and discussed. The main objective of the document was to point out ways how communication within EIFAC could be made more effective, how the achievements of the Commission could be better publicised, and by which means younger scientist and administrators could be attracted to the activities of EIFAC. The seven major points of the document have now been evaluated and the results will be presented to the Session. In most points there has been some progress, but continued effort will be needed in order to further improve the functioning of the Commission.

As one of the results of this exercise, a specific information session for National Correspondents will take place today later in the afternoon. The information will be based on a duty sheet for National Correspondents that has been drafted by the Executive Committee and circulated to all EIFAC Members. I am confident that this action will help to increase the effectiveness of the Commission by clarifying the role and the responsibility of National Correspondents. I also hope that this action will enhance the involvement of Member Countries in the activities of EIFAC by raising their awareness for the relevance and usefulness of the working programme of EIFAC.

In spring this year I had the possibility to visit the headquarters of the World Conservation Union IUCN and of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands at Gland, Switzerland. The discussions were insightful and showed that there is scope for closer cooperation in the fields of inland fisheries and the conservation of aquatic species. For the time being, this cooperation appears to be most promising in the Central and Eastern European countries where a number of fish-related IUCN projects are already under way. EIFAC has also been invited to join the World Wetlands Day on 2nd February 2007, of course with a focus on freshwater fish and crayfish.

Coming to an end of my opening address, I thank all Delegates for making it to the 24th Session of EIFAC in this beautiful lake district of the Salzkammergut. Let me stress again the importance of your participation and active collaboration within EIFAC. Lacking a proper budget, work and progress of the Commission depends almost entirely on the voluntary contributions of its members. EIFAC is fully aware of this difficulty. The success of a session is directly related to the discussions, propositions and commitments expressed by you during the Session. I appreciate your active contributions to the Session, and I am certain that you will not disappoint me!

I wish you all a pleasant and successful stay at Mondsee, and I thank you for your attention.

APPENDIX E

Terms of Reference of the Ad Hoc Working Party on Fish Monitoring in Fresh Waters Convener: P. Hickley (U.K.)

Purpose

To promote consistency of purpose and use of best practice in the monitoring of fish populations in fresh waters by facilitating:

- A. Provision of a scientific and technical advisory resource;
- B. Development of guidance on available and preferred methods of sampling.

Specific objectives

1. To gather information on the scientific work programmes of member countries relevant to fish monitoring;
2. To build understanding and fill knowledge gaps that currently compromise effective fish monitoring;
3. To encourage international consistency in the collection, analysis and reporting of information about fish communities and fisheries;
4. To produce best practice guidance and technical notes on fish monitoring;
5. To act as a forum for debate relating to fish monitoring methods and strategy;
6. To develop robust links across member countries for the dissemination of information;
7. To organize workshops on specific fish monitoring topics;
8. To advise on the development and content of European Standards on fish monitoring methodology, especially for the Water Framework Directive;
9. To identify and evaluate future scientific and technical fish monitoring issues of importance to the management of fish populations.

Outcomes

- a) Database of key information on fish monitoring;
- b) Network of user groups within member countries;
- c) Communication of methodology and best practice;
- d) Consistency of sampling and reporting across member countries;
- e) Awareness of fish monitoring emerging issues.

APPENDIX F**Terms of Reference of the
Ad Hoc Working Party on Introductions and Stocking
Convener: I. Cowx (UK)**

- Review of stocking, introductions and translocations operations including economic importance of activities;
- Audit the state of knowledge of the results of operations concerning stocking introductions and translocations of aquatic organisms, particularly concerning environmental and economic impacts and genetic interactions with wild populations;
- Develop risk assessment protocols for future aquatic species stocking and introductions, with specific models and sub-routine assessments to consider economic issues, the potential environmental and economic impacts of diseases in wild aquatic organisms and ecosystems, genetic interactions with wild populations;
- Provide guidelines for environmentally sound practices for stock enhancement operations.

APPENDIX G

Terms of Reference and Composition of the EIFAC Working Party on Fish Passage Best Practices Convener: Mr M. Larinier (France)

- Produce Best Practice Guides (publications) on upstream and downstream fish passage needs and facilities
- Define common methodologies and best practices for assessing fish pass efficiency
- Identify knowledge deficits, both for different species and geographic regions
- Disseminate information through new publications

The immediate priorities of the Working Party will be

- Elaborate a common terminology of fish passage facilities throughout Europe
- Define design criteria for different types of fish passes in relation to fish species and river zones
- Redefine the meaning of “natural fish passes”
- Address the aspects of downstream migration (best practice; R&D needs), particularly for eel

The members of this WP are P. Jäger and S. Schmutz (Austria), M. Ovidio (Belgium), N. Jepsen (Denmark), F. Travade (France), U. Dumont, R. Gebler and M. Redeker (Germany), T. McCarty (Ireland), C. Comoglio, E. Pini Prato and M. Ferri (Italy), E. Winter (Netherlands), T. Naesje (Norway), M. Jelonek (Poland), J. Bochechas (Portugal), D.S. Pavlov and V. Mikheev (Russia), A. Peter (Switzerland), G. Armstrong (UK). For specific topics, sub-groups can be formed inviting a limited number of the above-mentioned members.

APPENDIX H

Ad-Hoc Working Party on Organic Fish Farming (OFF) Summary of Results Contributed by Mr Volger Hilge (Convener)

(1) Status of organic freshwater fish farming in Europe

Recent developments of organic aquaculture in Europe

In contrast to conventional aquaculture, which dates back for many centuries, organic aquaculture in Europe is a rather recent development. To date the freshwater species which are farmed according to the principles of the organic movements are brown trout, charr (*Salvelinus alpinus*) and brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*), some byfish species of carp culture like tench, pike and pike-perch (*Sander lucioperca*), the European catfish and the European eel, but not the perch (*Perca fluviatilis*) as mentioned sometimes. These are the results of responses to a questionnaire sent out to member states of the European Inland Fisheries Advisory Commission (EIFAC/FAO). Unfortunately it is not easy to obtain valid information on species and quantities produced in organic aquaculture. There were at least 7 European countries producing freshwater fish according to organic standards, while two others were on the way to prepare for it. Production figures are low as compared to conventional cultures and can therefore only be of local importance. Organic fish apparently is a typical niche product. The steady and regular supply of the produce can be a problem.

The culture systems used are mainly traditional earthen ponds, but some experiments are run with recirculation systems and cages in the sea. The responses to the questionnaire regarding numbers of farms, tonnage produced, cultured area etc., are unfortunately incomplete. Products are often sold fresh or smoked and the prices are apparently somewhere in the range of 20 – 50 % above usual market prices. But sometimes the market demand is low and consequently no premium prices can be obtained. Direct marketing at the farm gate is one way to sell this fish in Germany, while sales in specialised organic stores are also possible.

There are a number of issues related to the implementation of organic aquaculture standards like prohibited use of traditional therapeutants such as formaldehyde or copper sulfate for the treatment of diseases. Higher production costs result in higher market prices, and the consumer's willingness to pay for this is difficult to foresee.

Standards

Standards in general serve as guidance for the producer who wants to enter into organic management, as a reference point for the inspection and certification procedure and as information for the consumer about the method of production. The challenge for organic aquaculture in Europe is less linked to consumer safety, environmental degradation or technical problems in intensive aquaculture production, but rather relates to the safeguarding of typically small family-run fish farm enterprises.

There are quite a number of organic agriculture associations all over Europe, which have established rules or standards to prescribe how to farm according to basic organic principles.

These NGO standards can differ from one association to another. And rules for organic farming established by governments can again be different. Not all associations deal with fish (or mussel or crustacean) farming. Those doing so are Debio (Norway), Krav (Sweden), Naturland (Germany), Ernte (Austria), BioSuisse (Switzerland), Soil Association (UK), among others.

Their standards vary with regard to details and severeness, and they deal in very different ways with managerial aspects of e.g. origin of stocking fish, controlled reproduction, feed formulation, treatment of diseases, hygiene, water quality, oxygen supply, manure, transport, slaughter and processing. In addition to the many standards prepared by NGOs there are also a few governmental ones. The French Ministry of Agriculture developed a set of rules for biological aquaculture, which are particularly detailed with regard to the different aspects of organic production.

These few examples may indicate quite some variation among the different standards. Therefore there is a need to unify them. Furthermore they should be examined for their scientific background, which includes the application of “best management practices” i.e. a strong and clear scientific basis for each parameter applied. It is again noted here that standards differ, sometimes significantly, among different organizations or countries.

Policy support

According to the replies to the above mentioned questionnaire governmental policies like subsidies or other financial or technical support do usually not exist in Europe, but there may be some R&D to support development of OFF. Some financial help for the conversion of conventional to organic culture as given in some countries to organic agriculture does not exist until now for aquaculture.

Certification

Conversion to and certification of organic fish farming and the labelling of the produce may be according to governmental legislation or in the hands of private organisations, which then are members of IFOAM (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements). Therefore a governmental legislation dealing with the organic way of production does not exist everywhere. It should be noted here, that the European Commission intends to enlarge the regulation 2092/91/EU on organic agriculture to include organic aquaculture as well. Certification includes the process of surveillance/inspection, which cannot be done continuously but necessarily has the character of a spot-check. Furthermore the direct marketing of small quantities of products renders quality monitoring difficult. Responsible state authorities, producer associations and other stakeholders should ensure that self-regulation and inspection measures are in place that guarantee safe and high quality products from organic fish farming.

Organic feeds

There are only a few feed mills in Europe producing organic feeds for trout (and salmon). Organic carp production in contrast relies on the natural productivity of the pond and/or on additional feeding of cereals derived from organic agriculture.

(2) Comparative research on the quality of rainbow trout from conventional and ecologically certified farms.

Results of a survey

Rainbow trout is the main product of German freshwater fish culture. A few farms apply organic standards in their production. Trout from these farms were compared to fish from conventional farms for quality and environmental impact. Furthermore two feeding experiments were conducted in the laboratory to compare conventional and organic trout feeds.

Nitrogen excretion pattern during the day course in terms of ammonia in relation to ration size, water temperature and body weight exhibited a clearly lower ammonia excretion for the conventional feeds, which combined with the results of the growth trials reveal a lower environmental impact of the conventional as compared to the organic way of rainbow trout production. Therefore organic movements should adapt their standards for the production of trout feeds accordingly.

Quality determinations of portion trout included general biological parameters like length and weight, health status and dress-off weight. Microbiological tests, colour and texture measurements, surface structure and aromatic profile with the help of an electronic nose were performed directly after sampling. Proximate analyses, vitamins, carotenoids, iodine and pollutant burden (PCBs, dioxins) and parasites were examined as well.

The overall quality of trout regardless of their mode of production was good. This included appearance and skin pigmentation. The microbiological status after keeping the fish for two days on ice was excellent, all tissues were sterile and no clostridia could be detected. Main differences among all fish were related to the fat content in the muscle.

There was no relation between the mode of production (conventional vs. organic) and body composition. Pollutant residues were far below maximum allowable limits and differences in the burdens between fish of both ways of culture did not exist. The sensory assessment as taste, texture and odour revealed no differences nor did the aroma or texture profile analyses.

(3) Outlook

There is little experience with organic aquaculture products on European markets due to the small quantities produced and sold till now. Premiums paid under these circumstances in big warehouses of important cities may differ from what the consumer is usually willing to pay.

To date the total organic aquaculture production in Europe is in the range of a few hundred to several thousands tons, certified by some 18 certifying bodies applying all slight but significantly different standards. Certifiers foresee a significant increase in organic production, particular for carp in Austria, salmon in Norway, and rainbow trout and sturgeon in Spain, or cod (*Gadus morrhua*) on the Shetland Islands. Market demand appears to be promising, and may also offer possibilities for producers from other parts of the globe, provided transparent labelling, and enacting efficient information policies.

The consumer wants safe products of good quality, produced in an environmentally friendly way at low costs attainable for everyone. This is the direction future developments in farming of aquatic organisms have to take, and science has to play an important role there.

In view of current efforts at EC level the activities of this Working Party are suspended however keeping in mind to revitalize it once new issues and additional interest emerge. At present improvements in the OFF sector should include sampling and collection of statistical data, unification of standards, quality surveillance, and possibly the development of national policies.

APPENDIX I

EU Wide Legislation on Organic Aquaculture Contributed by: Mme Tarja Tiainen-Balsby (EC)

European Commission has proposed a major revision of the general regulation on organic production of agricultural products (EEC No 2092/91). Commission proposal (COM (2005) 671) on organic production and labelling of organic products has been discussed in Council Working Party on Foodstuff Quality since January 2006.

This draft Regulation aims at setting out the overall scope for ALL organic production, including aquaculture. It also provides definitions, objectives and principles, conditions for flexibility, controls and conditions for imports from non-Member States and labelling provisions for organic production.

Joined Austrian and Finnish Presidencies have recently proposed major modifications to the Commission proposal. These include among other things a revision of the text to better integrate aquaculture to the general articles of the draft Regulation, and harmonising Article 10 on farm production rules for aquaculture animals with the corresponding articles for plants and livestock.

Thereby, the draft regulation now proposes overall rules for the origin, husbandry and breeding of aquaculture animals. Also, rules for feed, and disease prevention and medication are proposed.

This Presidency proposal will be discussed further in the Council Working Group. Once the general Regulation has been approved, more detailed implementation rules as regards the production rules for aquaculture animals will need to be drafted. DG Fish envisages meetings with experts on different aquaculture related issues. These working groups are envisaged to commence in the autumn 2006.

Adoption of the general Regulation is envisaged by the end of 2006. It will enter in force as from 1st of January 2009. Approval of the detailed implementing rules on aquaculture is envisaged by the end of 2008.

APPENDIX J

Duty Sheet for National Correspondents of EIFAC

Extract from 23rd Session Session report, Wierzba, 2004.

74. *The National Correspondents have to play a more active role in promoting national and international collaboration among fisheries scientists, managers and administrators. National Correspondents should maintain a national database of fisheries institutions and fisheries scientists, thus enabling the flow of information to and from these partners. This concerns particularly the announcement of EIFAC symposia and sessions. National Correspondents and their ministries should be briefed on their function by the Chairperson, based on a duty sheet that will be prepared by the Executive Committee, assisted by the Secretariat.*

Based on EIFAC's Rules of Procedure,⁹ in particular Rule I (Membership) Item 2, the following functions and duties are proposed.

Functions and duties of EIFAC National Correspondents

- Correspondents should be appointed by the competent authority within their Government. National Correspondents should be recognized formally by the administrative and institutional framework of their governments as official focal points of EIFAC. Outgoing National Correspondents brief the incoming National Correspondent on the ongoing activities of EIFAC and on the duties of a National Correspondent.
- Correspondents participate regularly in the Sessions of EIFAC. They make sure that their country is represented at the Session by a National Delegation, led either by themselves or by a substitute. The head of the National Delegation is authorised to speak on behalf of his/her Government at the Session.
- Develop and maintain a national network of fisheries and aquaculture institutions, scientists and practitioners to facilitate communication and the flow of information to and from EIFAC. Use electronic mail. Develop a national website with links to the EIFAC website, as appropriate, to provide information links and resources on EIFAC and on inland fisheries and aquaculture matters of interest to their own country. Use the network frequently for information exchange.
- Promote national and international collaboration among fisheries and aquaculture scientists, managers and administrators by providing the necessary contacts, either directly or with the help of the EIFAC Bureau.
- Make use of the advice and information provided by EIFAC (reports, publications from symposia and by working parties). Inform national partners regularly of new inland fisheries and aquaculture publications by EIFAC.

⁹ See EIFAC rules of procedures (since 1998) at: <http://www.fao.org/fi/body/eifac/rules.asp>

- Periodically brief the superior office (e.g. Ministry) on the work and achievements of EIFAC.
- Notify EIFAC of problems and issues in inland fisheries and aquaculture that have been detected or that are or seem to be emerging. Inform EIFAC of relevant new publications and projects from their country.
- Encourage participation by experts from member countries in at least one of the activities of EIFAC (working parties, liaison groups, workshops, expert consultations, etc.) and facilitate the search for necessary funding for such participation at national and international level.

APPENDIX K

Report of the EIFAC Symposium on Hydropower, Flood Control and Water Abstraction: Implications for Fish and Fisheries

A Symposium on Hydropower, Flood Control and Water Abstraction: Implications for Fish and Fisheries was organized from 14 to 17 June 2006 in conjunction with the Twenty Fourth Session of EIFAC in Mondsee, Austria. The Symposium was chaired by Prof W. Stalzer (Austria) and convened by Dr R. Welcomme (United Kingdom) and was attended by 133 participants from 28 countries. The documentation included 51 papers and 23 posters which were presented under the following themes:

- SESSION 1: Assessment of Issues and Impacts
- SESSION 2: Rehabilitation and Mitigation Mechanisms
- SESSION 3: Environmental Flow Criteria: Methodology and Practice
- SESSION 4: Social, Economic, Conservation and Legal Aspects.

The Summary Report of the Symposium forms document EIFAC/XXIV/2006/Inf.11.

A summary of recommendations produced by the Symposium is presented below.

SESSION 1: Assessment of Issues and Impacts

- It is **recommended** that EIFAC establish a working group to assist member countries in conforming to the requirements of the European Water Framework Directive (WFD) by: examining the possibility of developing compatible sampling standards and common criteria; implementing the reference condition approach; establishing clear boundaries between good and fair ecological status and analysing the assemblage composition, sensitive species, and abundance and population age structure. It is suggested that the EC be approached to finance this Working Party.
- There are particular challenges in assessing human impacts when these act across large spatial and temporal scales. Furthermore most rivers are impacted in multiple ways and it is a major challenge to assign impacts on fish to individual pressures. The basic data needed for such assessments is lacking and it is **recommended** that member countries collaborate in country-wide and international compilation and sharing of databases on the relationships between anthropogenic pressures and fish responses. Activities should include long term monitoring and analysis, identification of interrelations among pressures and defining their significance in optimal restoration activities.
- It is further **recommended** that monitoring and assessment of restoration projects should be mandatory to evaluate their effectiveness and cost effectiveness to increase our knowledge on how to improve the ecological status of European rivers and that future activities that change the ecology of rivers and lakes include a provision for funding continued evaluation after the completion of such projects.

SESSION 2: Rehabilitation and Mitigation Mechanisms

- Knowledge gaps remain and a number of high priority areas for research or development were identified. In particular, if small-scale hydros are to be used on a large scale to help meet “sustainable” energy targets, then it is essential that we plug some of these gaps in knowledge to ensure appropriate levels of protection. Improvements in fish pass design and the options available should be disseminated for practitioners to employ. It is therefore **recommended** that guidelines on fish pass operation be prepared as joint publications that are made widely available.
- It is also proposed that member countries collaborate in sharing knowledge and in trying to harmonise standards in European countries so that developers receive consistent messages from the regulators as to the protection measures that need to be taken. It is therefore strongly **recommended** that a Working Group on Fish Passage Best Practice be set up under the auspices of EIFAC in Sub-Commission I (Convener: Mr. M. Larinier). The Working Group should continue to push the scientific boundaries, using modern technological advances to explore and provide novel solutions to the many challenges for sustainable anthropogenic exploitation of the aquatic environment.
- The session identified a number of avenues where research and development are required, particularly in the field of fish behaviour (macro and micro), fish friendly turbines, guidance and by-pass techniques and **recommended** to scientists and research institutions that they carry out appropriate investigations.

SESSION 3: Environmental Flow Criteria: methodology and practice

- A range of methods, including modeling, expert judgment, literature reviews and case studies, is used to establish water resource objectives. However, fisheries remain weakly integrated into policy decisions when designing flow regulation and abstraction regimes. There is thus a wider need to identify decision-making pathways and integrate fish and fisheries, as a primary stakeholder, into the process.
- It was **recommended** that EIFAC member countries:
 - exchange approaches to establishing environmental flows and promote fish as a key quality element and
 - adopt a risk assessment based approach for flow regulation and abstraction activities. The strength of action should relate to the potential risk of the flow manipulation intervention.
- It was **recommended** that EIFAC promotes the preparation of guidelines for establishing environmental flow criteria for fish and fisheries. These guidelines need to be easily understandable by key stakeholders, in addition to fisheries administrators.
- It was **recommended** that agencies responsible for formulating proposals for setting environmental flows:

- include key stakeholders in the consultative and decision-making processes for water resource development to ensure sustainability of inland fisheries resources;
 - fully evaluate catchment wide activities to identify factors that may affect environmental quality and what problems may still persist; and
 - fully evaluate and set realistic targets that water resource managers and the public find acceptable.
- It is further **recommended** that post-project monitoring of flow regulation and abstraction projects is a component of the evaluation procedures and the effectiveness thereof, and the results should receive wide dissemination.

SESSION 4: Social, Economic, Conservation and Legal Aspects

- The symposium showed the importance of legislation for the improvement of water bodies for fisheries. The WFD and the European Habitat Directive are particularly helpful in ensuring that rivers are maintained in good condition but these should be supported by local regulations and guidelines. It was recognised that, although not all EIFAC Members belong to the EU, the WFD will influence their legislation. It was **recommended** that EIFAC assist such countries to participate in the WFD through exchange of information on regulations and on compilation and dissemination of associated material.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

- The Symposium expressed severe concerns about the negative impacts on fisheries, fish and other aquatic wildlife posed by the proliferation of small-scale hydropower installations throughout Europe. It **recommended** that member countries of EIFAC consider the issues these developments raise for the sustainability of river fish communities when developing strategic power and water abstraction policies.
- The Symposium identified the need to look at river catchments holistically (including estuarine waters) and strategically in planning and using protective measures, mitigation, rehabilitation, and wise use of water budgets. It **recommended** that the catchment based approach be fully incorporated into the strategic water management plans of EIFAC Members.
- The Symposium noted that whilst the impact assessment of small hydro power structures is well understood and that certain technical aspects for the mitigation of their effects were well developed, other critical areas still needed work and institutional support. Firstly there is a widespread lack of understanding and application of environmental flows to protect fish and fishery resources. Secondly, efforts for rehabilitation of rivers are still limited across much of Europe, especially with regard to restoration of lateral connectivity disturbed by flood control measures. Thirdly, adequate policy and administrative tools for incorporating fisheries concerns into the planning process for hydropower generation and water abstractions is lacking in many cases. Lastly, it is difficult to ensure the stakeholder participation required by the WFD. It is **recommended** that the Members of EIFAC establish and enforce mechanisms for the assessment of the impacts of hydropower structures and

water abstractions into their planning process and adopt measures to mitigate their effects, including rehabilitation of the degraded rivers.

- It is further **recommended** that EIFAC establish an appropriate mechanism to further examine the disparity between technical and social approaches.
- The Symposium noted that the WFD provides an example of national and international regulations to regulate the quality of the aquatic environment for fisheries. It felt that this approach could usefully be brought to the attention of other regional groupings of FAO and **recommended** that FAO critically examine this Directive and the European Habitat Directive with a view to help countries understand and implement it and export its approach elsewhere.

The twenty-fourth session of the European Inland Fisheries Advisory Commission (EIFAC) was held in Mondsee, Austria, from 14 to 21 June 2006, in concomitance with a Symposium on Hydropower, Flood Control and Water Abstraction: Implications for Fish and Fisheries. The session reviewed EIFAC's activities since 2004 in the fields of fishery biology and management, aquaculture, protection of the aquatic resource, and social and economic issues. EIFAC revised and decided its future programme of work, in particular the activities which should be carried out until the next session of the Commission in 2008. The twenty-fifth session will be preceded by a Symposium that will focus on interactions between socio-economic and ecological objectives of inland fisheries, commercial and recreational, and aquaculture.

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