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"Aquaculture in Motion" 2015

16/11/2015, CoR

Welcome address of Mr Jesus Gamallo Aller

(CoR rapporteur on aquaculture and Director-General for External Relations and Relations with the European Union, Region of Galicia (ES/EPP))

Ladies and gentlemen,

Distinguished guests,

It is a pleasure for me to welcome you today in the premises of the European Committee of the Regions at "Aquaculture in Motion" 2015, the annual conference of the Federation of European aquaculture producers. I will try to be short, because I know you have a long and interesting day ahead of you.

I am here not only as a member of the Committee of the Regions and rapporteur on aquaculture, but also as a representative of the Spanish region of Galicia, where we consider aquaculture very important. As you are well aware, Galicia is one of Europe's big fishing regions, but we nevertheless truly believe we need to develop aquaculture in our region complementary to fishing, and we think there is no need to set extractive fishing and aquaculture in opposition to one another. On the contrary, I believe we must work towards complementarity.

As I already mentioned, I am also rapporteur on the opinion "The future of European Aquaculture" at the Committee of the Regions, where we advocate

different measures to make European aquaculture competitive and fit for the future.

The approach that we have taken for the CoR opinion on aquaculture was to outline future challenges and think of possible solutions, and we invited also our partners from the Commission, Council and Parliament to join us in our efforts to boost European aquaculture. Among the challenges we have identified are competitive pressure from third countries, simplification of administrative procedures and access to space, general enterprise competitiveness and quality control, sustainability, and possibilities for the improvement of market and supply chain. I believe that if we address timely these issues, we can make European aquaculture even more successful.

In the opinion I propose several key measures that I think can improve the situation for European producers:

- 1) Introduction of one stop-shop approach to licencing – we consider a single administrative access point for all license request to be a first important step to cut red tape

- 2) Establishing a simplified, or "fast-track", licensing system for aquaculture producers that already operate another production site and would like to start new operations on another site

- 3) We have requested to the European commission to introduce a labelling system for aquaculture products, which will distinguish European products, instil confidence in consumers, enhance products' quality image and set them apart from competitor products.

- 4) The opinion also takes note of the negative impact on sustainable aquaculture of the rapid recovery of protected species, and we have requested

from the European Commission, in the course of any future updates to the nature protection directives (Birds and Habitats), to take account of current conflicts involving different uses of maritime, river and land areas, and to introduce population management plans for these species

An in order to back my CoR opinion and policy recommendations with actions, in my home region of Galicia we will apply this recommendations in practice with the Aquaculture Act of Galicia. This will make Galicia Spain's first autonomous community to have an aquaculture act, which will regulate the possible farming locations and license concessions.

Let me once again thank you for being here today, and I want you to know that with the European Committee of the Regions you have a partner that has supported and will support European aquaculture.

Thank you very much, and have a very good day here in Brussels.