

POSITION PAPER

On the proposal for a EUROPEAN COMMISSION COMMUNICATION on a NEW APPROACH FOR A SUSTAINABLE BLUE ECONOMY IN THE EU

3 November 2020

Background

To meet the European Green Deal objectives at sea the European Commission is setting a vision for a transformation of the Blue Economy under the Green Deal's axes of decarbonisation, zero pollution, circularity and biodiversity. The European Commission's Communication proposal aims to reach its objectives by encouraging sustainable solutions, innovative products and services and emerging sectors with high employment potential and low environmental impact.

The FEAP shares the European Commission's view that the Blue Economy forms an integral part of the European Green Deal and that a new approach is needed to develop such economy in a sustainable way through coordinated management. The FEAP acknowledges the prominent role of aquaculture in the Blue Economy alongside other economic activities.

However, FEAP emphasises that the Blue Economy, besides marine aquaculture, also encompasses economic activities that take place in freshwater, such as fresh and brackish water aquaculture.

FEAP's claim

Aquaculture (marine, brackish and freshwater) is part of the solution to meet the objectives in the Green Deal (greenhouse gas emissions, circular economy, biodiversity, and sustainable and resilient food systems).

Arguments

1. The EU self-sufficiency ratio on aquatic products has remained at around 43 % for the last decade and EU's trade deficit on seafood has increased since 2013 and reached a negative peak of more than 20 billion EUR in 2018. Aquaculture can help close the gap.
2. Aquaculture production demonstrates a high ecological efficiency and low environmental impact.

3. Pressure on land use and freshwater resources are key drivers of biodiversity loss. Aquaculture requires little land and hardly any freshwater consumption.
4. Aquaculture generates a very low carbon footprint.
5. Aquaculture systems convert feed into body mass very efficiently.
6. Aquatic products have health benefits and can play an important role in addressing malnutrition and obesity.
7. Aquaculture provides jobs to women and young people in rural, coastal and in the outermost regions.
8. Aquaculture has clear synergies with other new activities like renewal energies.
9. Aquaculture is compatible with other activities like fishing, nature conservation and tourism.

Initiatives

1. Develop regulatory frameworks and revise existing regulations to address barriers to growth of aquaculture.
2. Create a best practice platform to foster knowledge transfer and closer collaboration among Member states.
3. Strengthen social acceptance and address false perceptions about aquaculture.
4. Establish a competitive level playing field for aquatic products in Europe.
5. Investigate the possibilities to increase the share of circular economy in aquaculture.
6. Allocate physical and environmental space to aquaculture via maritime spatial planning.
7. Facilitate compensatory measures integrating farming of low-trophic species with fish farming.
8. Improve consumer information at sale points to ensure responsible purchasing decisions.
9. Promote holistic innovation and research to implement new aquaculture technologies and to optimize conventional aquaculture systems.
10. Disseminate the natural values and ecosystem services of aquaculture sites (freshwater, brackish and marine) and their role in the maintenance of wetland habitats.

This FEAP Position Paper is to be posted in the Roadmap consultation opened by DG ENVIRONMENT until 7 December.