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Executive: The amendments proposed for a Regulation on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)

The Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP) has reviewed the amended proposal by the Committee on Fisheries of the European Parliament for a Regulation on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)². The FEAP believes that this Regulation, rather than encouraging development of European aquaculture, to the contrary it will have a severe negative impact if adopted as it stands.

As reported in the study on 'Indicators for Sustainable Aquaculture in the European Union' (JRC Report E-08 2007), 'the analysis of aquaculture sites and their contribution to employment confirms that aquaculture activities offer important contributions to some coastal and rural economies in terms of employment opportunities'.

The Commission amendments of the EF Committee on Fisheries for the EMFF proposal contains almost 600 amendments, of which many deserve further comment but we limit our response to the four most critical issues which are described as follows:

1. Intensive aquaculture

The proposed definitions for different types of aquaculture divide aquaculture forms according to nutritional inputs and subjective comments on farming stocking densities. Extensive farming depends largely on feed whereas intensive farming depends on nutritionally complete diets plus feed. It follows from a number of amendments proposed that intensive farming is seen as being "non-green" in the future.

Following the definition of intensive aquaculture provided, it has to be noted that this sector represents 99% of today's far fish farming.

The underlying rationale is three-fold:

1. That intensive fish farming is not sustainable
2. That intensive fish farming relies predominantly on fishmeal and fish oil products
3. That intensive aquaculture operations have a severe negative impact on the environment

The amendments aim to provide certain definitions but completely avoid defining "sustainable aquaculture". These statements and/or lack of definition give credence to underlying subjective and negative opinions.

² European Parliament, Committee on Fisheries, 13.10.2013, EP-000027002